



# Giovanna Pompele

MAR 16, 1962 - AUG 26, 2022



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# Giovanna Pompele

MAR 16, 1962 - AUG 26, 2022

**B**orn in Verona, Italy, Gio immigrated to the U.S. to complete a Ph.D. in English from University of Southern California. Until 2016, she taught English and Gender Studies at the University of Miami until ME/CFS made it impossible for her to work.

Gio struggled with severe and always increasing physical disability. She also carried an enormous amount of emotional pain which remained resistant to all her valiant efforts to soothe it. Despite having immense courage and strength, she was unable to continue to bear the suffering and chose to end her pain.

She was deeply loved and is survived by her husband, Simon, her partner, Jennifer, and her family: mother, Mariella, sisters Silvia and her husband Massimo, Sandra and her husband Franco, Anna and her husband Federico, and nieces and nephews Pietro, Tommaso, Cecilia, Francesca, Camilla, and Bianca.

Gio's wit, her intelligence and, most of all, her love were always in evidence to those who knew her. Those she loved became their best selves because she saw in them the best. We are grateful to have known her and to have been touched by her spirit.



# Tribute Wall

**Giovanna Pompele**

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TS

**Terry Sigman** posted:

On this night I want to send my love to Gio's Mama and all of her family in Italy and extend a very heartfelt "Thank You" for giving the planet such an extraordinary human being . I always felt blessed to know her, I can hear her laughter, quick wit and uncanny ability to have the best comeback lines for any absurdity the world could offer up daily. My dearest Simon, thank you , thank you for keeping the light on. There isn't a night that goes by that I don't look for it. I was always happy knowing that some higher order of conversation was going on up your stairs . That Gio had a solid rock of support and stimulation who by the way could also cook. Gio , thank you for being my joustier and my friend . I miss you, but I hold you in my heart and as I always told you at the end of an email.....I am so glad you were here, we are all so glad you were here. ❤️🍕🍕🍕❤️ Your forever Pal, Terry

August 26 at 6:18 PM

DU

**Dusanka** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

It's been many weeks since Gio passed away, and I hadn't posted on here earlier, but but her presence remains so I find myself coming to this page again and again. I know she will forever remain in the thoughts and hearts of all of us whose paths she crossed. I never met Gio in person, although we had many conversations on Facebook while she was on it, some brief and silly, and some deep and profound, but all felt so meaningful to me. What a gift she had in connecting with people. My virtual hug to all of you who loved her in person - family, Jennifer, Simon - and also to all of you whose paths she crossed in other ways and left her mark on. And my photo share may seem a strange share for the rest of you. But when Gio was down she would ask me for photos of my dog, Cody. So this is for you Gio - my most recent picture of Cody.



October 25 at 7:37 AM

MP

**Marta Peluso** shared a photo to the **Gio <3** album.



October 10 at 9:48 AM

MP

**Marta Peluso** shared a photo to the **Gio <3** album.



October 9 at 3:13 PM



## Tribute Wall

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**Heleana** posted:

I am in shock. But I suppose that I shouldn't be. A million things are running through my head, about what I should have done and said, how I could have been. I will say that I'm better for having known Gio. I will miss her forever.

September 23 at 5:41 AM



**Sam Phillips** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

With so much affection, Rest In Peace, dear Gio. May her memory be a comfort, dear Simon.



September 9 at 2:00 PM



**M. Evelina Galang** posted:

Giovanna, it's me. Ate. My heart breaks knowing I cannot hear your voice anymore (though in truth, it's here inside me) and knowing you have suffered. I am sorry for your suffering in this life. Your heart has always been bigger than the sun. Full of passion and compassion and love and understanding, even as you saw injustice, named it and fought it. So many things I wish we could have spoken of in these last few years. Isn't it funny how I thought there'd be time for all of it. That our tending to the life before us would eventually create space for a dinner, or a coffee, or a good laugh between you me and Simon. Oh yes, and Chauncey. I wish you had known him better. Miguel and Rubee send their love. We are all thinking of Simon. I promise you I will bother him so he remembers he too is loved. Your light is still shining, and now it is in the particles coming through the window blinds. It is in the memory I have of you carrying on with that wonderful fierce sense of you. Jovial you. Witty you. May you be happy. May you be blessed. At peace. Miss you. Ate

September 7 at 1:54 PM



**Laura Sanders** posted:

I am so sorry to hear this news. Gio had the fiercest sense of justice of anyone I have ever met. She was passionate, brilliant, generous, and absolutely hilarious. I am deeply grateful we got to stay in touch after grad school via social media, and I recognize that my life was richer for knowing her.

September 2 at 12:41 PM



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SI

**Silvia** posted:

Many quarrels when we were children, but then a great reconciliation, a relationship mended with love. My memory of Giò will forever be her smile and her love for everyone. I miss you Giò

August 31 at 12:23 AM

LB

**Linda Belgrave** posted:

My fondest memories of Gio are 1. her incredible work during the UM janitors' strike. She was a force of nature! She organized places for us to teach off-campus and matched our class times & sizes with the spaces she found. She called whenever our presence was needed for an action. She was in the thick of it from beginning to success. 2. Gio once left me a phone message without stating her name. I called back and pronounced her name as any ignorant American would. Whoa, did she ream me out! 3. Meeting for coffee at one or another of the bakeries in South Miami. We sat talking for hours. Gio is (can't wrap my mind around the past tense yet) one of the most amazing women I've ever know. I have been blessed to have her in my life.

August 30 at 4:08 PM

TS

**Tommaso Seneci** posted:

A great fighter, that's how I want to remember you. A splendid fighter until the end Thank you for having been so kind with me Giò, I will miss you.

August 30 at 10:11 AM

DA

**Daniel** posted:

I have great memories of dinner parties with Simon and Gio so many years ago, while in graduate school at UCLA. She was a spark, so lively and smart, despite her struggles. It has been a long journey. I wish her peace and Simon and her family and friends warm thoughts. Daniel

August 29 at 6:53 PM



# Tribute Wall

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**Eve Richardson** posted:

My heart feels heavy when I think how much Gio must have suffered before deciding to leave us. I met Gio online - playing a variation of Scrabble. We never met in person, but we did have some phone conversations when she did her best to help me get a Word Press site going. She was patient and generous with her time. I had exchanges with her about people who are transgender, her paintings, photographs and other topics. I've missed her presence on Facebook and am very sad that she's no longer with us. My heart goes out to Jennifer, Simon, and her family.

August 29 at 5:00 PM



**Torin Alter** posted:

I am so sorry. I was so sad to learn of Gio's suffering and passing. We were in grad school together, and I hung out with Simon and Gio all the time. She was so full of life. I remember one year when we had a Thanksgiving meal together and she insisted that cottage cheese was a traditional Thanksgiving dish--despite all of the Americans saying it's not. I think she found the idea too amusing to be incorrect, and that she did was somehow hilarious; I think we were actually yelling. Anyway, either she brought some cottage cheese or someone else did, and that seemed confirmation (of something anyway). Since then I \*always\* have a little chuckle to myself on Thanksgiving--saying things to myself like, "I've got to remember to get some cottage cheese." I don't even know if I've mentioned this to anyone, but I somehow imagined that one day we'd again share a Thanksgiving meal and I'd reveal a dish of cottage cheese and we'd laugh like we did all those years ago.

August 29 at 2:43 PM



**Torin Alter** shared a photo to the **Gio <3** album.



August 29 at 2:33 PM

**SP** **Sandra Pompele** August 30 at 2:13 PM  
Bellissima qui la Gio.....e anche Simon



## Tribute Wall

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FR

**Francesca** posted:

Gio. Quante cose vorrei poterti dire, soprattutto quanto mi manchi. Nonostante la lontananza, sei stata una persona fondamentale nella mia vita. Con la tua saggezza, intelligenza e talvolta ironia, eri sempre pronta ad aiutare e sostenere il prossimo. I tuoi consigli preziosi, le chiacchierate, i tuoi insegnamenti di vita, rimarranno sempre con noi. La cosa assurda è che eri talmente generosa, disponibile e proiettata verso il prossimo, che spesso ci dimenticavamo di quanto tu avessi bisogno di noi. Spero tu possa perdonarci per questo. Ti aspettiamo con tutto il cuore Gio. Ti voglio bene. La tua nipotina, la tua Fra.

August 29 at 8:07 AM

RB

**Robin Bachin** posted:

I am so deeply sorry! Gio was such a treasure, a warm, kind, smart, and witty soul. Sending thoughts of healing and comfort!

August 28 at 8:34 AM

PS

**Paul, Marija And Sabina** posted:

So sorry to read of this. Gio was a remarkable person, really like no one else we've ever known. Passionate, witty, wonderfully weird. We will miss her dearly, but always remember her. ~ Paul, Marija and Sabina

August 28 at 8:29 AM

PL

**Peter Lewis** posted:

I remember vividly our early years in Miami, taking a walk to the Sunset Tavern for a drink and some ridiculously entertaining conversation, mostly sparked by Gio's endless wit and wisdom. I'll hold those memories always.

August 28 at 8:18 AM



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AT

**Amie Thomasson** posted:

I remember meeting Gio for the first time, and being firmly lectured about the right way to pronounce her name. (I never forgot). I remember having drinks with Gio outside at Sunset Tavern, at a sticky plastic table with an orange umbrella. Those regular outings helped me get through the early difficult years in Miami, helped me feel I had a new home of friends like family there. You could tell Gio anything, and she was always frank, funny, and deeply compassionate at the same time. She would always see, and she taught me to see, what was adorable in other people--even those I might have otherwise found awkward, difficult, or opaque. We laughed about setting up the 'Foundation for Undermining the Christian Kingdom'. She taught me Italian (a rare privilege, she assured me!) with ever so much patience and humor. She organized and wrote a hilarious play in honor of Peter for his 40th birthday (we still have the script). She was there at the naming ceremony for our first daughter, held the coin we flipped to choose a name. Would've been a godparent if we had been religious. She had a way like no one else of making a conversation roll, and no one could be so blunt, boundary crossing, and incredibly warm and loving at the same time as Gio. Seriously, no one else could remotely carry that off. I remember her warming my heart all over again after the sexual harassment scandal in our department, and feeling her love and support, even though we hadn't seen each other in a while. I hope she felt I was there for her, too, even when we didn't meet so often. I loved Gio. She was one of the most interesting, unique, funny, and loving people I have ever known. There's no one remotely like her. I see the world differently, because of Gio, and it's hard to imagine never having known her. It's hard to imagine a world without her.

August 27 at 1:46 PM

DU

**Dusanka** October 25 at 7:40 AM

I made a video (of my pup) for Giovanna and Jennifer one day and mispronounced her name in it. So I have her correction in writing: "okay so, gio is pronounced jo. yes. truly. jo. just like joe. that's how it's pronounced. and giovanna is consequently pronounced jovanna. yeah?" :)

JW

**Jennifer Watson** shared a photo to the **Gio <3** album.



August 28 at 5:38 AM

RP

**Roxane Pickens** posted:

Sending condolences and peace to Gio's dear family...she was a tremendous spark, and I'm grateful to have known her just a little bit. With love, Roxane Pickens

August 28 at 5:01 AM



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PI

**Pietro** posted:

We have been away from Gio for many years and felt little, but when we did feel it was like we felt every day. A hug Gio for your last trip. Pietro e Alessia

August 28 at 1:10 AM

DS

**Debora Schwartz** posted:

I am (we are) so sorry to hear this sad news. Sincere condolences to Simon and to all of Gio's family and loved ones. May her memory be a blessing. Debora & Larry

August 28 at 12:11 AM

SP

**Sandra Pompele** posted:

Giovanna era una persona unica. Una sorella speciale. Ha lasciato in tutte le persone che l'hanno conosciuta un segno indelebile. Aveva una grande intelligenza, sensibilità e umanità. Riusciva ad entrare nel cuore delle persone. Ha vissuto una vita molto difficile e molto sofferta con grande coraggio. Mi ha dato molto conforto nei momenti in cui ne ho avuto più bisogno. Con semplici parole riusciva a farmi dare una lettura diversa alle cose e ai fatti della vita. Mi ascoltava col cuore e mi trasmetteva tanta speranza. Pregava tanto per me e per tutti noi. Vorrei poterle dire ora cose che non le ho mai detto o che le ho detto poco. Ma glielo dico comunque e glielo dirò sempre perché Giò è con me e con noi ora più che mai e il suo abbraccio non ci mancherà mai. Giò ti vogliamo tanto bene. Sei il nostro angelo in Paradiso. Abbiamo tanto bisogno di te. La tua adorata sorella Sandra La tua Spizi

August 27 at 9:38 PM

MR

**Mike Reynolds** posted:

Gio was equally fierce and loving in her approach to books and films and all things worth loving, and fighting about -- especially people. And she was unwaveringly compassionate, and as unwaveringly forceful, in how she pushed those lucky enough to know her to be their best selves when reading, when writing, when connecting. I will cherish having gotten to know her in grad school and having been able to keep in limited touch across the distances of social media.... and I will miss her voice, her wit, that passion. May her memory be a blessing to her family and all who loved her.

August 27 at 2:03 PM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anthony Barthelemy** posted:

She was a source of joy, wisdom and light for so many. I am saddened by her loss and extend condolences to her family and to Simon. I wish you all comfort in your time of grief.

August 27 at 1:46 PM



## Media

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**Dusanka** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

October 25 at 7:37 AM





# Media

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October 10 at 9:48 AM



Simon, Giovanna, Patti & Roma. San Luis Obispo, CA, 2001



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Marta Peluso shared a photo to the **Gio <3** album.

October 9 at 3:13 PM



Verona, June 1999, Visiting Marta, George, Patti & Lou.



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September 9 at 2:00 PM





Torin Alter shared a photo to the **Gio <3** album.

August 29 at 2:33 PM



Simon and Gio, at UCLA.



Jennifer Watson shared a photo to the **Gio <3** album.

August 28 at 5:38 AM





## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Giovanna by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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