

Hortman, Melissa and Mark



Melissa Hortman - 1970-2025
Mark Hortman - 1966-2025

Melissa Anne Hortman (née Haluptzok) was born on May 27, 1970 in Fridley, Minnesota. Mark David Hortman was born on November 30, 1966 in Atlanta, Georgia. Mark and Melissa were tragically taken from their family, friends, and loved ones on June 14, 2025. They lived lives full of love, dedication, and service.

Melissa graduated from Blaine High School in 1988, received her undergraduate degree from Boston University in 1991, her law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1995, and a Masters in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School in 2018. Melissa learned early from her parents about the importance of following the Golden Rule, and the value that "to whom much is given, much is expected." She felt she had the ability and the obligation to serve others. Partly attributable to Abraham Lincoln, and partly attributable to Walter Mondale, Melissa believed that a worthy pathway to public service was to become a lawyer. She started her legal career at Legal Aid, suing discriminatory landlords. She won a record-setting verdict in a housing discrimination lawsuit.

Melissa quickly realized there was only so much she could accomplish through litigation, and ran for the Minnesota House of Representatives. After three tries, she won in 2004, eventually rising to the rank of Minority Leader and then Speaker of the House. Early in her legislative career, she focused on transportation and energy policy, writing Minnesota's trailblazing solar energy standard and community solar laws. Melissa was the longest-serving female Speaker in Minnesota history, and led during the historic 2023-2024 session, described by many as the most productive in 50 years. Her incredible record of accomplishment was only matched by her humility and her ever-present instinct to defer credit or accolades.

Outside of her work, Melissa enjoyed cross country skiing and gardening. She loved baking and would frequently bring in cakes for her staff.

Mark graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1989 and received an MBA from the University of Minnesota Carlson School in 2011. He worked for IBM in Maryland while Melissa interned in Washington D.C. When they both signed up to volunteer as mentors at a local school, they were matched to the same student. They were engaged three months later. Melissa and Mark got married on August 13, 1993.

A highly-skilled professional, Mark worked for a decade for John's Auto Parts, the Haluptzok family business, and had a fruitful career in the tech industry, most recently working for nVent.

Mark was a man of many hobbies and interests, and he always loved to try new things. He fell in love with mountain biking - a hobby he picked up from his son, Colin. He was an excellent pocket billiards player. What started as a hobby became more serious, with Mark taking lessons, becoming co-captain of a Monday team at CRs Sports Bar. He experimented with brewing beer at home and at one time considered opening a distillery. Mark had a monthly card game with friends and had recently picked up woodworking as his newest hobby. But most of all, Mark was friendly, outgoing, and genuine.

Mark and Melissa loved to travel around the country and the world with their family, creating lifelong memories and an appreciation for nature, different communities, and the beauty of the world around them. The Hortman family volunteered with Helping Paws, an organization that trains service animals and they brought two dogs into their home to train. Melissa and Mark's daughter Sophie partnered with Mark to successfully train Minnie, who is now paired with a veteran. Gilbert's infectious energy and love of people forced him to choose the different career path of Hortman family dog. Melissa's greatest love, outside of her family, was reserved for Gilbert.

Mark and Melissa are survived by their children, Colin and Sophie, Mark's parents J. Carroll Hortman and Ruth Russell-Stern, and Melissa's parents Harry and Linda Haluptzok.

Melissa and Mark Hortman will lie in state with Gilbert at the State Capitol on Friday, June 27 with an opportunity for the public to pay their respects. A private funeral will take place Saturday, June 28 with invitations from state partners on behalf of the family.

If you would like to honor the memory of Mark and Melissa, please consider the following suggestions from their children, Sophie and Colin:

Plant a tree.

Visit a local park and make use of their amenities, especially a bike trail.

Pet a dog. A golden retriever is ideal, but any will do.

Tell your loved ones a cheesy dad joke and laugh about it.

Bake something - bread for Mark or a cake for Melissa, and share it with someone.

Try a new hobby and enjoy learning something.

Stand up for what you believe in, especially if that thing is justice and peace.

"The best way to honor our parents' memory is to do something, whether big or small, to make our community just a little better for someone else."

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