



Nancy Ann Nichols

JUL 30, 1937 - APR 21, 2019



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Nancy Ann Nichols lived.

The very best breakfast is a leftover piece of homemade apple pie and black coffee. Sitting with long legs crossed at the dining room table, she could see her rock garden, the pasture that was shared by a few horses and cows alike, the brook—and beyond that—the hayfield. She was a picture of elegance, and this was the dream life, which included —but was not limited to—a home built in the 1800s needing a new septic, well and furnace; a barn that had collapsed in the night; termites and rogue farm animals. But Nancy Ann Nichols had everything she needed to make her own happiness on The Farm: a husband she adored, good friends, in-laws that loved her and four children to be raised amongst the chaos. Growing up outside of Boston in Abington, Massachusetts Nancy had a safe and pleasant childhood. But these were tumultuous times. Her mother, Anita Smith, gave birth to twins Nancy and Betsy on July 30, 1937 and died two months later. The twins were sent to live with their paternal grandparents, Nana and Papa, allowing their father, Arthur Smith, to work. Before their first birthday, Nancy's twin had died of encephalitis. Raised during the Depression with her aunts, uncles and cousins as playmates, both uncles were sent to fight in World War II. Despite these worries, Nancy shared stories of playing in the fields doing cartwheels and handstands, shopping for Easter dresses with a favorite aunt, receiving dyed, pastel-colored baby chicks on Easter Sunday, and visiting her stubby-fingered, Italian-only-speaking grandmother Vecchi, who Nancy knew adored her, despite the language barrier. She joined the Girl Scouts and went to summer camp for a week on scholarship. Nancy was never afraid of hard work, and at 14 took her first job as a soda jerk at Lynches Soda Fountain. In high school, she was a cheerleader and basketball player as well as class secretary. After graduation in 1955, she met the love of her life, Frederick R. Nichols, a strapping young fellow who frequented the Soda Fountain. His parents, Fred and Bertha Nichols, had an old cottage on The Cape and Nancy, on one particularly hot, summer evening, lamented that she wished she were going to the beach. And so, the romance began. Nancy, however, had plans to become a licensed practical nurse and to attend nursing school. Before she left for the 15-month program, Fred sold his very own fish delivery truck to purchase an engagement ring. She always believed that “distance makes



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the heart grow fonder” and in their case, it did. As soon as Nancy graduated, the couple married: February 28, 1959 was the first day of their 60-year love affair. Three weeks later they moved to the Midwest. Their “honeymoon baby” girl, Betty Ann, arrived in December; Janice arrived in March 1962; and in May of 1963 their son David was born. Eight years and a thousand miles later Karrie (Karen) was born in New Hampshire. The adventures of Nancy and Fred took them zig-zagging across the country from Massachusetts to Illinois, New Hampshire to Wisconsin, North Carolina to Colorado...finally landing back East in Maryland. No matter how many years she spent in the Midwest or the mountains, Nancy was a known New Englander by her accent and equally proud of her Italian ancestry. Regardless of where they moved, she knew that it only took one good friend to keep loneliness at arm’s length. As they traversed the United States seeking a better job or a better life, Nancy built friendships to be envied. She was an extraordinarily kind, loyal, quick-to-laugh and quick-to-smile friend. She knew that coffee and sweets served over laughter was the best therapy. With Fred traveling for work, Nancy was extremely capable, strong and resourceful caring for the children, the farm and the community. She loved her work as an LPN at the local hospital, nursing homes and hospice. Family vacations took the family to the beach or to the Colorado mountains to ski. After the kids left home, Nancy and Fred enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Italy. While living in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, they vacationed annually to Mexico during “mud season.” Nancy was known to make grinder sandwiches and horse-show punch, the best homemade pumpkin and apple pies, potato salad and chocolate cakes. She welcomed people to her home, adorning rooms with fresh cut flowers, usually from her own garden. She absolutely loved babies and there was no greater happiness than the arrival of her grandchildren. She faced life-long fears to see those babies: driving through mountain canyons and staying with her youngest daughter for three months when twins arrived the day after Easter. Nurse Nancy was an absolute life-saver with a baby, always knowing exactly what to do. While driving in the car, Nancy might burst into an out-of-tune rendition of, “This Little Light of Mine” or “You Are My Sunshine.” She had an appreciation for church music and was scolded by her aunts as a girl for turning around in church to gawk at the choir. Nancy Nichols possessed an extraordinary beauty, grace and unequalled fortitude. She looked Alzheimer’s in the eye and gave it a knowing nod. Her expressions were priceless, her laughter infectious, and she never ceased to smile. She thought not of herself but only of her family. Ever fond of her husband, she told him how handsome he was—even in her final weeks. Nancy is survived by her loving husband Frederick R. Nichols; children Betty Ann Gildea (Christopher) of Annapolis, Maryland; Janice Nichols of Alexandria, Virginia; David Utzman-Nichols (Lynn) of Fort Collins, Colorado; Karen Wenning (John) of Cross Plains, Wisconsin; grandchildren whom she adored, including: Megan and Elizabeth Gildea; Forest and Evan Utzman-Nichols; Gus and twins Kate and Oliver Wenning; and dear cousin Carol DeFlavis, Abington, Massachusetts. Nancy Ann



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Nichols loved and lived. A Life Celebration service will be held at the Blue Crab Coffee House, 102 S. Fremont St., St Michaels, Maryland, 21663 on April 29, 2019 at 10:00 am. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hospice www.talbothospice.org, Alzheimer's Research www.alz.org or a charity of your choosing.



Tribute Wall

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Linda (Davis) Clark posted:

My heart is sad. Nancy was another mom to me. I have so many wonderful memories with her and the family. One of the stories I remember, let Nancy have her coffee before you ask her anything. Her laugh was amazing. Heaven differently gained a beautiful, loving, angel. Thanks Nancy for help making me the woman I am today 🥹❤️

April 25 at 3:31 AM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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