



Nancy Alice Baker

November 22, 1948 - April 12, 2020

Nancy “Nan” Alice Baker (Alvord) was born on November 22, 1948 and departed this life on April 12, 2020. The family celebrated her life and reminisced around her bedside showing pictures, telling stories and saying goodbye. At her passing she was surrounded by her husband and children holding her hands, comforting her and praying with her until the end.

Nancy grew up in Gloversville, New York near the Adirondack Park and Catskill Mountains. She was the daughter of Vincent Hugh Alvord and Elizabeth Jane Alvord (Naginey). Her early years were spent pursuing a number of different interests, but also in support of the leather glove and goods production and retail business, begun by her great-grandfather, Benjamin Alvord. They traveled throughout New York and Pennsylvania attending fairs and selling leather goods from their booth. Later the business would establish a retail store, Alvord’s House of Leather in Mayfield, New York and gain notoriety for the 1971 installation of a 30’ likeness of Nancy’s brother Stephen.

Early in her life it was clear that God had blessed Nancy with a wonderful singing voice. She sang often at the family’s church, Gloversville First United Methodist Church. Throughout her elementary, middle and high school years she performed in numerous school productions, often as the lead female vocalist. Her senior year production of “Oklahoma!” featured her as the lead role of Laurey. Nancy attended Hartwick College with an intention to study French, but soon switched to Voice, earning her Bachelor of Arts. As a member of the Hartwick College Choir she toured and performed in a wide variety of venues. The Choir toured Europe for several weeks in 1970 to sing in cathedrals throughout France, Germany, Holland and elsewhere with Nancy as a featured soloist. Following her father’s habit, she wrote consistently to her parents to report the events of her time in Europe with great details about the countryside, dangers of the Berlin Wall zone, the strength of the beer in Holland and Germany and the success of their performances, including the number of ovations she and the choir received as well as the number of autographs she was asked to sign.

Upon graduation from Hartwick, Nancy entered the teaching profession, following her mother’s chosen vocation. After teaching for a few years, Nancy enrolled at the State University of New York at Oneonta and received her Masters of Education. Thereafter she

began teaching K-6 music in the Johnson City, New York public school system. A lifelong devoted Christian, Nancy began attending Faith Baptist Church in Binghamton, New York. There, in 1973, she met Thomas Craig Baker, who, on June 29, 1974, would become her husband fifteen months to the day of their meeting.

The married couple moved to Ipswich, Massachusetts for Thomas to attend Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and where Nancy continued to teach K-6 music, a position that required her to push a piano through the ramped hallways from class to class. Among the things she enjoyed in Ipswich were picnics on the beach, not far from their apartment, fresh seafood and new friends. In 1976 they moved to Barrington, Rhode Island where Nancy and Thomas worked at Barrington College. Nancy taught in the College's music education department in a variety of capacities, including placing student teachers into practical experience classrooms. In 1978 Nancy gave birth to her first of two children, her son Joshua, and devoted herself to motherhood and also began teaching piano lessons at home. Later it would become clear that her worst piano students would turn out to be her own children, a fact they very much regret today. In 1981 Nancy gave birth to her daughter, Laurie.

In 1984 the family moved to Manassas, Virginia, where Thomas and Nancy have lived ever since. They became heavily involved at Manassas Assembly of God. Throughout her life she continued to sing with her church choir and as a soloist, ministering to her fellow congregants on Sundays, as parts of Easter and Christmas productions and very often on Christmas Eve, always singing "O Holy Night." In 1990 Nancy returned to teaching the Manassas City Public School System and taught first grade at Weems Elementary School for the next fifteen years, a position she enjoyed immensely as she cared for and taught her classes. As her children grew, Nancy was a supportive and good mother. She was not afraid to set standards and to enforce them with love. She happily attended baseball games, basketball games and anything else in which her children were involved. Often her largest task there was keeping her husband from cheering too vigorously.

Perhaps nothing made Nan happier than becoming a Grandmother, first to Olivia (2003), then Camille (2006), Simone (2007) and Cecilia (2016).

She was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's in her mid-50's, which caused her to retire early from teaching and robbed her of her memories, friendships, voice, and the opportunity to enjoy the later years of her life. It also robbed her friends and family of the joy she brought them and prevented her from living her later years as she had wanted to – spoiling her grandchildren and traveling. Early on she wanted anyone who was concerned that they may be losing memory to get themselves screened early for the disease.

Throughout her fifteen-year struggle with Alzheimer's Thomas was consistently by her side taking care of her at home, taking her to doctor appointments locally and at UVA's Memory Care Clinic to participate in numerous Alzheimer's research projects and learning about the disease to be better equipped to care for her. He cared for her lovingly and

enduringly each day as the light of his life slowly dimmed, sitting with her daily and reading Scripture, making her laugh and talking to her.

Importantly, Nancy did not want to be defined by Alzheimer's or to be remembered in the way that the disease would change her. It was very important to her that she be remembered for the life she led.

So please join us in remembering her for who she was, not the disease she had, by remembering her smile, infectious laugh, generosity of spirit, faith in Jesus, love of the color red, willingness to help her friends, voice and ministry of singing, appreciation for beaches and mountains, love of dark chocolate, delight in popcorn, jumping rocks at the Wells campsite, enjoyment of a good handbag, excitement of finding a deal shopping, enjoying time in Hilton Head, dedication to her students, love of her family, support of her children, devotion to her husband and for all of the good, fun and different memories you may have of her.

Nancy was preceded in death by her parents, Vincent Hugh Alvord and Elizabeth Jane Alvord. She is survived by her loving husband of nearly 46 years Thomas Craig Baker; her children Laurie Elizabeth Ashton and her daughters Olivia, Camille and Simone; her son Joshua Ellis Baker, his wife Katherine Evaleen Connors Baker and their daughter Cecilia; her brother Stephen Edward Alvord and Janet Heffernan; as well as many nieces and nephews. All of whom are comforted to know that she is once again singing with her Savior and has joined the Heavenly Choir.

The family will hold a private graveside ceremony at Stonewall Memory Gardens Cemetery at their convenience. In the post-COVID19 world, the family plans to invite friends and family to a private memorial.

In lieu of flowers the Bakers encourage donations to be made to the Alzheimer's Association, UVA Memory Care Clinic or Vitas Hospice and specifically wish to thank the doctors, nurses, staff at UVA and Vitas for their excellent care and comfort.

The Bakers especially wish to thank Ana Castaneda, who became Nancy's earthly angel by so lovingly caring for and comforting her throughout her last years.

Comments



“ I would like to offer my condolences to the family of Nan Baker. I was saddened to hear of her passing. I met Nan during my tenure as a teacher at Weems Elementary School. She was a loving, kind, and always friendly co-worker. She had a smile on her face no matter how busy she was bustling up and down the halls. Nan was always willing to assist her fellow teachers and lend a helping hand. The world has lost a precious soul.
In sympathy,
Connie Soulsby

Connie Soulsby - April 17 at 10:24 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Nancy Alice Baker.



April 16 at 04:48 PM



“ So many memories singing with Nan in the choir and ladies group. Precious woman of God. Prayers for her family. I know she is rejoicing!!

Cheryl Pressner - April 15 at 07:26 PM



“ I was so sad to hear of Nan's passing. As a teacher at Weems, I enjoyed her smile, her being a great teacher and her enthusiasm for living life. My sympathies to the Baker family.

Jo Ellen Peters - April 15 at 05:17 PM



“ Nan was a precious sister in the Lord and my wife Mary and I attended the Philippians Sunday School Class together for years. I love the words “she is once again singing with her Savior and has joined the Heavenly Choir.” My Mary is also rejoicing forever in heaven with that choir and they are not gone, only gone ahead! Prayers Thom, Josh and Laurie and may the Holy Spirit comfort you all!
Sam

Salvatore (Sam) Tropea - April 15 at 04:10 PM



“ The Ken Burtram family wants to express our sincere condolences for each of Nan Baker's family, Tom, Joshua and Laurie. Our teens were a part of Manassas Assembly of God Church where Nan regularly blessed us with her music. I remember her has a lovely, kind woman who was a joy to be around. I enjoyed singing in the choir with her.

Thanks be to God that she is no longer subject to the restraints of this earth and is rejoicing in the presence of her Savior.

Our love and prayers to all who loved her.

Ken, Johnese, Joy, Joel, Jonathan, Kevin, and Joshua Burtram

Johnese Burtram - April 15 at 02:25 PM



“ What a beautiful tribute to a beautiful woman. I remember Nancy's boundless energy and amazing creativity when she would describe how she taught. She used such wonderful ways to reach every student. They were blessed to have her as a teacher. Our deepest sympathy goes to her family, to Steve, to Jennifer, Kimberly, Ryan, and their mother Cindi. So thankful for her family's tribute to her shining faith.
Love from Nancy and Bob Byers

Nancy and Bob Byers - April 15 at 01:18 PM



“ My sincere condolences to Nancy's family. I graduated from high school with Nancy in 1966. I will always remember Nancy's beautiful voice but most of all her beautiful spirit.
Maryann Mandeville Walker

maryann mandeville walker - April 15 at 11:45 AM



“ Sending heartfelt sympathy to Nancy's beautiful family. I remember well ,skipping those same rocks in the Wells Campsite with Nancy and Steve and the very wonderful memories our parents made for us. Remember, too, her fantastic lead role in Oklahoma. I am very sure that she will continue to stand out in heaven's most jubilant choir. Sending God's blessings and prayers to her family and friends.

Lynn Sedal Smero - April 15 at 10:58 AM



“ Condolences to the entire Baker family on the passing of Nan. She was always upbeat and had a smile for everyone. Ran "sound" for her many times at MAG when she would do solo work. Taught her how to "back off" the mic on a hard, high note. She was fun and easy to work with. May the riches of God surround each family member as you go through this time of change and difference. This is only temporary and she will be reunited with family I think before too long. God bless!

Sam & BJ Beachy - April 15 at 08:52 AM



“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



George F. - April 14 at 09:40 PM



“ These are a few images from Hilton Head Island and Nan with a group of ladies from the Soul Purpose Class

George F. - April 14 at 09:43 PM



“ Nothing I can put into words can lessen the pain and sorrow that you are going through. I am sure that Nan will be singing with the angels in heaven for eternity. Nan was a very special friend so long ago. We took many walks and spent time together on the beach at the Wells Campground so long ago. Nan was on my arm during my Senior Ball at the Mayfield High School. My wife, Kathy and I wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to Nan's family. May God Bless each of you and bring you peace. Dave Rutkowski

David - April 20 at 09:57 PM



“ I sang in a ladies group with Nan for a while. She was always upbeat and cheerful. A fun lady to be around. A good and patient piano teacher also. Linda Bassett

Linda Bassett - April 14 at 07:40 PM



“ I do not remember Nancy but know Steve. She seemed like a wonderful person that will be missed. My condolences and prayers go out to the family.
Rick Fallis

Richard Fallis - April 14 at 06:35 PM



“ Thank you for your thoughts and prayers for our family during this time. We would prefer donations in moms name to the Alzheimer's Association, UVA Memory Care Clinic or Vitas Hospice in lieu of flowers.
Thank you,
Laurie Ashton (Baker)

Laurie Ashton - April 14 at 05:19 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Nancy Alice Baker.



April 14 at 03:49 PM



“ 28 files added to the album Memories Album



Josh - April 14 at 03:35 PM



“ Joshua Baker is following this tribute.

Joshua Baker - April 14 at 03:32 PM



“ Wonderful pictures, Josh. It's lovely to see your smiling mom at the center of your loving family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.
Diane & Jerry

Diane Morrison - April 16 at 03:05 PM



“ My sincere condolences to her family and friends.
Mary A. Ivancic

mary ivancic - April 17 at 10:41 AM