



## Dawn Marie Lewis

November 17, 1942 - March 29, 2025

Dawn Marie Lewis, 82, of Manassas, Virginia, passed away peacefully on March 29th, 2025. Dawn was born November 17th, 1942, in Elmira New York to John (Jack) Minch and Lillian Christastie. She was raised in Elmira as well as Scranton, PA and Morristown, NJ as the oldest of three daughters. From an early age, she knew that she wanted to be a nurse and a nun. Dawn graduated from Notre Dame High School in Elmira in 1961. After high school, she joined the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Rochester, New York and took the name Sister Basil. Dawn has always been highly independent and decisive. Although her local order was primarily focused on teaching and education, Dawn decided instead to go into nursing and attended the Saint Joseph's School of Nursing. She became a registered nurse in 1967 and did missionary work in Selma, Alabama during the Civil Rights Movement, doing public health and administering vaccines in African American communities. In 1970, she left the convent and finished her bachelor's degree at the University of Maryland, which she graduated from in 1971. She went on for her master's degree in nursing at Catholic University and graduated in 1973. Afterward, she worked as a school nurse and also for the Maryland Department of Health in community clinics in impoverished communities.

In Gaithersburg, Maryland, Dawn met Edward Lewis and they married August 23rd, 1975. They went on their honeymoon in Ocracoke, North Carolina. In 1978, Dawn and Ed welcomed their daughter, Elisa Marie Lewis. Three months later they moved to Manassas, Virginia, for Ed's career, where they

remained for the rest of their lives. Dawn taught nursing at Osborn Park High School, and later, biology at Garfield High School. She went to Uganda on a research expedition in 1993 and came back with stories of lions, hippos, and new friends. In 2000, she received a master's degree in library science from the University of Tennessee through their distance learning program. She then became a librarian at Garfield High School until she retired in 2012.

Dawn remained very active and engaged in retirement. She continued to travel and went to places like Italy, Croatia, and Iceland. Dawn was a life-long learner and continued to take classes throughout her life. She particularly loved nature and science. She was a Master Gardener and her daughter's family could always count on her knowledge to help them with gardening. Dawn was also politically engaged and attended the Atlantic Festival multiple years. She loved attending the opera, musicals, and cultural events with friends and family.

Dawn was widely loved. She was always surrounded by family and friends, old and new. In 2010 and 2015, Dawn and Ed welcomed their two grandchildren, Lilly and James Arndt. She was a loving and generous "Mema," as her grandchildren called her. She and Ed enjoyed several trips to Europe with friends. She frequently hosted friends and relatives and made her home as welcoming as possible.

In 2016, her beloved husband Ed passed away. Dawn is survived by her daughter Elisa Marie Lewis, her grandchildren, Lilly and James Arndt, her niece, Kristin Collins and her three children, and her nephew, Robert Hotaling, and his son. No words can fully express how much she will be missed. A memorial service to honor Dawn's life will be held summer 2025, with the date and location to be announced later.

# Tribute Wall

DJ

“ Dawn was such a great neighbor when we lived in Manassas. Prayers to all the Lewis family Dan and Donna Jackson

Donna Jackson - May 04, 2025 at 03:59 PM

PS

“ I have so many wonderful memories of your mom when we were students at St Joes. So kind and caring and so much fun! Always smiling!! Send love and prayers to all of your family.❤️Patti Grace Spencer

Patti Grace Spencer - April 10, 2025 at 12:15 PM

RB

“ We greeted Dawn as we greet the day - with the sun, with a fresh perspective on life, with humor and wit. Dawn — Always in our hearts.

Ruth Balton - April 09, 2025 at 08:20 AM

JS

“ Enjoyed working with Dawn at Garfield. She wss always a happy, sweet soul to be around.

Jane Stevens - April 09, 2025 at 01:18 AM

CJ

“ Dawn was a dear friend and former colleague in Public Health, Montgomery County Health Dept, I met her in 1976. So many of us considered her a Nursing mentor, she had expertise in so many areas. We often saw pediatric patients at the old Poolesville Clinic which abutted a laundromat and a hardware store. Her patients adored her. We made home visits in the foothills of the Sugarloaf Mountain for patients who were unable to come into the clinic. She loved her job and I can tell you that she made a difference in so the lives of many vulnerable and disenfranchised patients. In the past 5 years , a small group of us from the original Gaithersburg Health Center, had lunch with Dawn, and just had the best time catching up after many years apart. She will be missed terribly. My sincere condolences to her devoted daughter Elisa, grandchildren, and entire family. Hers was a life well lived.

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**Carol Jordan** - April 09, 2025 at 01:05 AM

JC

“ I was a high school classmate of Dawn and am sorry to hear of her passing.



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**Jim Coletta** - April 07, 2025 at 05:34 PM

MW

“ Sending our deepest condolences to Dawn's family. We are grateful to have worked with her. ~ Master Gardeners of Prince William

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**Master Gardeners of Prince William** - April 07, 2025 at 03:30 PM

MC

“ My condolences to Dawn’s family. I met Dawn when we were nursing classmates at St. Joe’s. She was bright but, more importantly, she was very funny. Her dry sense of humor lightened even the most serious moments in our nursing education. I was delighted to see her at a recent reunion. Her spirituality was evident, her accomplishments were praiseworthy and her humor was priceless! My prayers are for her and her loved ones.

Mary Carroll Capozzi

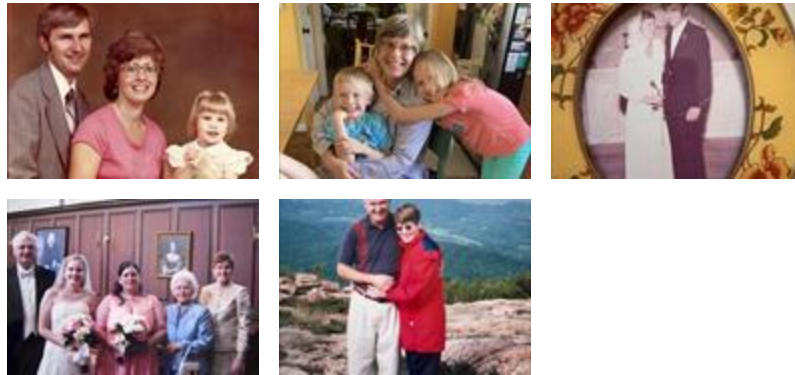
Class of '67

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Mary Capozzi - April 07, 2025 at 01:47 PM

EL

“ 8 files added to the album Dawn's pictures



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Elisa Lewis - April 07, 2025 at 11:53 AM