



Nancy Saunders

July 31, 1940 - October 12, 2018

After a long, two-year battle with metastatic breast cancer that she fought with courage, Nancy Saunders passed away on October 12, 2018. She received excellent medical care from Highlands Oncology and enjoyed the staff's smiles and upbeat attitude. During her final days at home, she appreciated the caring and wonderful hospice care from Washington Regional.

A self-labeled "Harvard faculty brat," Nancy attended Beloit College for two years but left because she couldn't stand the elitist attitude. After graduating with a BA from the University of Pennsylvania and attending a year at Oxford, Nancy received an MA in TV and Movie Production from Stanford. Studying everything, as she was raised to do by her father, psychologist George Miller, Nancy was an intellectual without any pretensions. For example, despite her lack of teaching experience, Nancy mastered the material used in the University of Arkansas English Department and became a very popular teacher, including among many of the Razorbacks players. Nancy had become an avid Razorbacks fan after she realized she'd better learn about football when watching her first game with Budd.

Working with the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Nancy actively protested the Vietnam War. When eight activists were arrested for conspiracy to disrupt the 1972 Republican National Convention (seven vets and a conscientious objector) and later tried in Gainesville's Federal Court, she helped their defense team. Proud that they trusted her to tell their story, Nancy's life work began with this event. Working from her copious notes about the trial, which have been preserved in the Texas Tech archives, she spent 27 years writing *Combat By Trial: An Odyssey with 20th Century Winter Soldiers*. She learned to be tough from the Vietnam Vets she befriended, but showed her gentle ways when she encountered any Vietnam Vet, whom she would hug and say, "It's late to say it, but welcome home." Nancy wore a VVAW shirt proudly and frequently. If anyone asked what it meant, they got a brief lecture. Nancy's letters to the editor on everything from protesting a garbage dump on a mountain to espousing medical cannabis were widely read. For 15 years, Nancy and her husband Budd lived with two wolves, Geri and Freki, studying about wolves and taking many photos of them. These and other photos decorated their unique home, including those she had taken of many of her friends, the

Gainesville 8, and of her father and his awards.

After her baby girl Tori died, Nancy needed to give something else life and put her energies into her first garden, working in that space day after day, filling old tires with soil and raising herbs and flowers and later adding strawberries and snow peas. She also planted and nurtured an elm for years. When the outside garden became too hard to maintain, Nancy created an elaborate, fantastical indoor garden for gnomes, who would visit it each year, along with children, such as her grandson Leo, who would enjoy seeing how it had transformed. The night their baby girl died, Budd said that God must be very lonely. Nancy found support and fellowship within the St. Paul's Episcopal Church community, where one worshipper described her as a devout agnostic. She was becoming a Gnostic when she passed in the loving presence of her devoted husband Budd Saunders. In addition to her husband Budd, Nancy is survived by her brother Donnally Miller, stepson Rennie Saunders, his wife Eleanor, Nancy's grandson Leo, her nephews Julian, Morgan and Gavin and her beloved Great White Pyranees guard dog Mari. With Nancy joining Tori, God is not nearly so lonely.

Memorial donations in memory of Nancy may be made to Washington Regional Hospice, the VVAW or Heifer International.

Cremation under the direction of Moore's Chapel.

A memorial service will be held 1:00 pm Tuesday October 23, 2018 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church with a reception to follow.

Comments



“ I never met Nancy but felt like knowing her from the letters she wrote. And now reading the obituary I found out what a remarkable woman she was. Please, Budd, accept my deepest sympathy! I really don't have any comforting words; just that I am so very sorry for your loss.
Hedy Hickerson

Hedy Hickerson - October 27, 2018 at 10:23 PM



“ Bud I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Nancy was such a sweet lady and she will be missed by many. Much love and prayers kevin curry and family

nicole curry - October 23, 2018 at 06:42 PM



“ Budd,

I am so very sorry to read this sad news. We both go back a long way, not least in our respect and affection for Robert Reeser.

Please know that I am thinking of you at this very sad time.

Evan

Evan - October 22, 2018 at 05:19 PM



“ Thank you Nancy for fighting for the people and being a voice for Vets. We did not know each other but I knew of you and often see Bud at the old Bomart now the new Harps. I live down the road in Crosses. I am grateful for all the good work you have done. You have been a warrior and you deserve a warrior's rest.
Thank you
Mike Oglesby

Mike Oglesby - October 22, 2018 at 03:34 PM



“ Budd and family. Our prayers are with you all. Jo and Merle Williams

Merle Williams - October 21, 2018 at 04:23 PM



“ Bud, this is a voice from the past--long past, Phyllis Johnson, Jim's wife. I am so sorry to hear about your loss--I knew you had met someone very special several years ago and Nancy was as special an individual as you are. I remember reading the obituary about her dad not too many years ago and knew she came from "good stock." Please do ring me up some time 479-244-5913--and we can sit around doing a good bit of remembering. I feel certain that you know that Kathy died about 4 years ago--I still keep in touch with Linda Wheeler who has moved further south in Joplin about two years ago. She is doing quite well. Her family home (on 32nd and Moffet) survived Joplin's horrific tornado, but she decided to move to a newer place. It's just a block from 32nd and Shiffirendecker.

My youngest son, Wil, lives with me in Springdale. He started a new job this past August--teaching at Haas Hall in Bentonville, It has almost killed him (and me, too), but things are getting better. Teaching is a very demanding job most especially the first year.

I am so sorry to have to miss the service, but I have a previous engagement that day. Please do feel free to call anytime. I really would love to visit about old times.

Sincerely and much love, Phyllis Johnson

Phyllis Johnson - October 21, 2018 at 04:00 PM