

Mary Van Kirk



August 7, 1945 - December 30, 2009



Mary Elizabeth Van Kirk was born on August 7, 1945 and grew up in Roanoke, Virginia with her mother, Goldie Copley Van Lear; father, William Brainerd Van Lear; brother, Harry (Jack) Evans; and sister, Linda Evans.

She graduated from Northside High School in Roanoke, where she excelled academically and in the theater. She attended The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA, where she met her future husband Philip Van Kirk. After their marriage in 1965 and a move to Raleigh, North Carolina, she graduated with honors from North Carolina State University in 1967. This same year saw the birth of her daughter and first child, Larisa Lind. Her son, Philip Gregory, was born in 1969 after a move to Norfolk, VA.

Mary began her work life there in social work. She migrated to real estate following moves to New Orleans and Memphis. After the family relocated in 1977 to their present home at Mt. Kemble Lake in Harding Township, New Jersey, she began her career with the National Telephone Directory Service (NTD), a private yellow pages company which served the tri-state area. Beginning as a sales representative, Mary rose through the management ranks culminating with her promotion to Executive Vice President in 1993. She was honored to be the first female officer at the company.

Throughout her life, she focused her abundant grace, kindness, and love on her husband, children, grandchildren, family, and friends, and volunteered countless hours in service to others. She served her church (First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon); her community (the New Vernon Annual Blood Drive, and The Mt. Kemble Lake Association); and organizations supporting people in need (The American Cancer Society, Homeless Solutions, The Affordable Harding Corporation, and The Morristown Soup Kitchen). People could always count on Mary to respond and be helpful, no matter what. She personified "servant leadership" and approached no task as too big or too small. Recognizing her commitment and impact, the Harding Township Civic Association honored Mary with its "Distinguished Citizen Award" for 2008 following the town's Memorial Day Parade.

After Mary developed breast cancer in 1996, she and her husband Philip retired and lived as inseparable partners in everything they did. She continued to be a nurturing and loving Mom to her two adult children and their mates; to be an indulgent, loving "Sugar" to her four grandchildren as they arrived one by one; and to be a loyal and supportive friend.

She is survived by her husband Philip, her loving partner for the past 44 years; her beloved daughter Larisa V.K. Gjivoje, with her husband Davor; her beloved son Greg, with his lovely Alison; her beautiful grandchildren Vedran and Elle Gjivoje; and EvaLuna Smith Gartner and Hudson Van Kirk, and her sister Linda Evans Stone.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to a charity of your choice or to Community Enterprise Solutions (www.cesolutions.org) in care of George B. Glickley at 112 15th Ave, Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785. Mary served on the board of directors of this award winning non-profit organization co-founded and led by her son Greg. To send online condolences, please email phil.vankirk@verizon.net.

Memorial Service for Mary Van Kirk
January 9, 2010 11:00 am

First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon
Dr. Richard D. Sweeney, Pastor

Prelude

Selections by J.S. Bach, Canon in D by J. Pachelbel
Margaret P. Gray, Organist

Solo Ave Maria by Franz Schubert
Srdjan Gjivoje, Vocals and Guitar

Welcome

Hymn No. 469 Morning Has Broken

Prayer

Scripture Readings

John 14: 1-3 and 27 Alison Gartner
II Timothy 4: 6-8 Davor Gjivoje, Jr.

Homily

Hymn (see insert) On Eagle's Wings

Reflections

Charles Farber, MD, PhD
John R. Murray
Joyce S. Murray (reading for Donna Van Kirk)

Interlude

In This Very Room by Ron and Carol Harris
Carol (Van Kirk) Wellford and Chris Wellford, Vocals

Reflections

Robert Van Kirk
Larisa Van Kirk Gjivoje
Greg Van Kirk
Philip Van Kirk

Serenity Prayer (In unison)

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to
know the difference. Amen

Commendation

Hymn No. 302 I Danced in the Morning

Benediction

Recessional

Postlude Fantasie by J.S. Bach
Margaret P. Gray, Organist

“Live



Life



Abundantly...



Every Day”



From Our Family

Reception: Our family invites you after this service for a reception at the Basking Ridge Country Club, 185 Madisonville Road, Basking Ridge, NJ. Our family will leave the church immediately after the ceremony, and we look forward to greeting you at the reception. You are also invited to look at the presentation of photographs and memories from Mary's life at the reception. (Directions to the Club: Turn right out of church parking lot, follow Lee's Hill Road for almost 3 miles, and turn left into the parking lot before sign for the "Somerset Hills Montessori School").

Ushers: Our ushers for this service are Candace and Richard Weeks, Fenton and Ruth Chaney, and Jane Kendall and David Dietz. We are grateful for their friendship and kind assistance.

Child Care: Child care during this service is available in the nursery at Fellowship Hall, which is next door, across the parking lot of the church.



Special Thanks: Special thanks to Robert Van Kirk and Michelle Maillot and John and Joyce Murray for their tireless contributions during the last two months. We also thank our neighbors at the Lake and the surrounding area for opening their homes to our out-of-town family and friends who have traveled long distances to be here today.



This Program: In collaboration with loved ones, and as a sign of her incredible strength, Mary herself designed key elements of this memorial service. She personally selected the musicians and musical pieces; she requested several of the speakers; and she personally chose David Mitchell of Still Life Designs to arrange the church florals and reception decor.



A Message of Gratitude

Our family has been overwhelmed with the kind deeds and words of friends, family and colleagues. We have received countless thoughtful notes, emails and phone calls expressing care and offering unconditional assistance. It is impossible to express how truly grateful we are to all of you. Your love and care has been Mary's greatest gift to us.

With love,
Philip Van Kirk
Larisa & Davor Gjivoje
Greg Van Kirk & Alison Gartner

*When I come to the end of the road,
And the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom filled room.
Why cry for a soul set free?*

*Miss me a little - but not too long.
And not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that we once shared,
Miss me - but let me go.*

*For this is a journey that we must all take,
And each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan,
A step on the road to home.*

*When you are lonely, and sick of heart,
Go to the friends we know.
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds,
Miss me - but let me go.*

- Anonymous



On Eagle's Wings

*You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in His shadow for life,
Say to the Lord: "My refuge,
my rock in whom I trust!"
And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
Make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hand.*

*You need not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day;
Though thousands fall about you,
near you it shall not come.
And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
Make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hand.*

*For to His angels He's given a command
to guard you in all of your ways;
Upon their hands they will bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
Make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hand.*

Michael Joncas