



Catherine "Cathy" Inez Blackburn Barnes

April 9, 1948 - February 9, 2025

Catherine "Cathy" Inez Blackburn Barnes passed away peacefully on Sunday, February 9th, 2025. She was born on April 9th, 1948, in Miami, Florida to William and Evelyn Blackburn.

As a child, Cathy, along with her three sisters and two brothers, lived in a succession of cities across the south; Miami, Florida, Portsmouth, Virginia, Decatur, Alabama and Chapel Hill, North Carolina to name a few. In 1966, she began college at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, majoring in Creative Writing; ultimately she would earn her Accounting degree from Georgia State University in 1979.

Post college, Cathy fulfilled a lifelong dream and started a family, welcoming her daughter, Kate, and son, Michael, in 1984 and 1987 respectively. She relished this time as a stay-at-home mom, parlaying her passion for childcare into a daycare that prospered in the small town of Kinston, NC. Around this time she was also diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, a plot twist she navigated with a determination and grace that would come to define her.

In the early 90's, Cathy relocated back to the Research Triangle, and with the move came renewed career ambitions. She took a job with Wake County Public Schools as an Accountant which proved to be a challenge as the tremor in her right hand intensified. In true fashion, Cathy taught herself to type and write with her left hand, claiming she was ambidextrous when questioned. Eventually she took on a job at Project Enlightenment, as the Manager of the Parent/Teacher Resource Center. So neatly aligned to her

passion for working with children, the years she spent at “Project” were some of the happiest of her life.

In 1998, Cathy and the kids moved to St. Augustine, Florida to be closer to her sister Teresa. She enjoyed a beautiful life in the idyllic southern beach town, and watched her children graduate highschool and go onto college. (A milestone that defied her original Parkinson’s prognosis.) While in St. Augustine, Cathy settled into the community, starting a Parkinson’s support group. She was a voracious reader and worked as a volunteer at the St. John’s County Public Library, and enjoyed working in her garden.

In 2011, Cathy moved to Westminster Woods on Julington Creek. At Westminster, she became a favorite of the care-giving staff and a pillar of the community through her near 15-year tenure as a resident. She was known for her sweet disposition, quick wit and great smile.

Cathy is survived by her daughter, Kate and her son, Michael. Additionally, she is survived by her sisters, Teresa Miska, (and husband George Miska), Susan Newman and Phyllis Barbour, (and husband Steve Barbour), and her brother, Peter Blackburn, (and wife Linda Blackburn). Cathy was predeceased by her brother Tim, and her parents William and Evelyn Blackburn.

A celebration of life has been tentatively scheduled for Friday, May 9th at the Fountain of Youth in St. Augustine, FL.

If you are compelled to donate on Cathy’s behalf, please consider the Westminster Communities Foundation linked here (<https://westminstercommunitiesfl.org/foundation/foundation-online-donation/>) or the Project Enlightenment Foundation linked here (<http://www.projectenlightenmentfoundation.org/donate-now.html>)

Tribute Wall

EL

“ I was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease four years ago. For over two years, I relied on Levodopa and several other medications, but unfortunately, the symptoms kept getting worse. The tremors became more noticeable, and my balance and mobility started to decline quickly. Last year, out of desperation and hope, I decided to try a herbal treatment program from NaturePath Herbal Clinic. Honestly, I was skeptical at first, but within a few months of starting the treatment, I began to notice real changes. My movements became smoother, the tremors subsided, and I felt steadier on my feet. Incredibly, I also regained much of my energy and confidence. It’s been a life-changing experience I feel more like myself again, better than I’ve felt in years. If you or a loved one is struggling with Parkinson’s disease, I truly recommend looking into their natural approach. You can visit their website at www.naturepathherbalclinic.com info@naturepathherbalclinic.com

Elizabeth - August 04, 2025 at 04:37 AM

PB

“ Cathy held me at my christening. As children, our age differences put us on different tracks, but like many siblings, the gap closed as we all began to raise families and have careers. There were early memories, though, that would define how I saw her over a lifetime. Cathy was smart, beautiful, and shy. She was a skilled seamstress, an avid reader with a strong vocabulary, a creative person who loved to make crafts with her kids, plant flowers, and was a hard worker at her jobs. Her most extraordinary devotion of mind and heart was to her children, Kate and Michael. She was also a loving sister. She was present in my life in many key moments — a champion for my successes and a comforter in times of need. I will miss her very much.

Phyllis Barbour - February 28, 2025 at 09:15 AM

LM

“ I met Cathy's sister, Teresa, in Junior High and got to know Cathy shortly after that. Teresa and I became fast friends and we marveled at how pretty and popular Cathy was and that she had fun at school. In highschool, we all went to Nags Head for Easter Break and for summer jobs. Cathy continued her popularity with the boys with a great tan.

I was lucky to get to see Cathy on trips to St. Augustine and see the love and enjoyment she got from her children.

I will miss her.

Lucy Morrison - February 25, 2025 at 08:21 PM

NS

Cathy was the oldest of 6 children. I was 4th in line. As young adults we shared adventures and as young mothers, parenting advice. She was sooo brave fighting PD. We always hoped a cure would be found for her and the many others who struggle with it. She will be missed.

Newman Susan - February 26, 2025 at 08:28 PM

TM

“ Cathy was born only 11 months before me. We were as close as siblings could be and I tried my best to keep up with her. When we lived near the Elizabeth River in Portsmouth, VA, our gang of neighborhood kids ran wild. A favorite adventure was to go to the river to try to catch fiddler crabs. We cut through elegant estates on our way, stopping to mount metal flamingo yard decor for a cowboy fantasy or to clatter sticks along picket fences. We were often taken by surprise in the river by the wake of a passing ship. Once we were soaked we figured we could swim for a while. Cathy was the boldest, strongest and most fearless child of all six of us. She was smart and a great beauty. It is a mystery why this child would develop early onset Parkinson’s disease. She had two brain operations to quell her symptoms. Eventually, she was forced to use a wheelchair. Cathy never lost her fearlessness. She sought out adventure wherever she could find it. I cannot imagine life without her but am grateful that she died quietly. I hope she was dreaming of racing to the river with chubby little me at her heels.

Teresa Miska - February 19, 2025 at 02:47 PM