



Sayra Babcock Poole

November 13, 1940 - September 11, 2024

Sayra Poole: Educator, Beach Lover, and Unforgettable Friend

Sayra Babcock Poole passed away peacefully on September 11 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Born November 13, 1940, to Lillian and Walter Babcock of Sterling, Connecticut, Sayra attended Plainfield High School and studied theater at UConn, intending to become a stage manager. But when an opportunity arose to earn her certificate in teaching, she followed her mother's footsteps into the educational field.

In her decades working for the Torrington Public School system, Sayra was both a font of inspiration and a force to be reckoned with. Her child-first philosophy put her on the cutting edge of reading pedagogy of the day. Ultimately she received a number of awards for her work as a reading consultant and went on to become a much-desired speaker and workshop leader. Sayra also inspired generations of students at Lewis Mills High School in Burlington/Harwinton, where she directed their annual musicals, including *West Side Story*, *No No Nanette*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Oliver* (twice!) among many others.

In 1966, Sayra married Arthur F. Poole of Harwinton. Their union was not forever but they did have one child, their daughter Hilary, with whom they were

reasonably pleased.

Sayra was known for her great love of beaches, including those of Martha's Vineyard and St Augustine, Florida.

It was in St Augustine that she began her vibrant second act. In between trips to the shoreline and her favorite restaurants, she volunteered at Marineland and served as a docent at the St Augustine Lighthouse, and she seemingly made new friends everywhere she went.

Sayra is survived by her sister Nancy Babcock, her daughter Hilary and son-in-law Mark Wood, and her beloved granddaughter Maia Wood (the light of her Mimi's life.) Sayra was preceded in death by her brothers Peter and Paul.

Above all, Sayra will be remembered as a loyal and true friend, a passionate educator, and a woman who lived life on her own terms. In keeping with her wishes, there will not be a traditional funeral service.

Instead, Sayra asked that we remember her in ways that celebrate her life and passions. We encourage you to honor her memory by enjoying a day at the beach, a glass of wine with a good book, or introducing a young person to the magic of theater. If you are so moved, please consider a donation to the Freedom to Read Foundation (<https://www.ftrf.org/donations/>) or the St Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum (<https://www.staugustinelighthouse.org/donate-today/>).

Tribute Wall

EM

“ I knew Sayra while at Uconn. She was a great friend. Please accept my deepest sympathy and condolences 🙏

Edwin Maguire - March 03, 2025 at 02:05 PM

JP

“ Hilary, Your Mom was so talented and giving. I especially remember the hours she devoted to teaching English to the Vietnamese children who came to Harwinton in 1975. You may not remember because you were just ready for kindergarten yourself, but she ran a class for all age kids every morning for most of July and August. At the conclusion she gave every child an evaluation to help their new school know where to place them. The kids in the family we sponsored definitely became more proficient and confident with English.

Cherish your memories!

Jane Pallokat and the Huyhn family

Jane Pallokat - October 20, 2024 at 11:08 AM

BM

“ For us, the world of show biz started and ended with Mrs. Poole. She directed our plays at Lewis S. Mills, and these were the most thrilling times of our high school lives. She was glamorous and dramatic, and also so caring and funny. She was Hello, Dolly and Auntie Mame rolled into one, with a little -- but not too much! -- Mamma Rose thrown in to keep us motivated.

She is one of the reasons we love musical theater to this day.

---Beth and Jennifer Mix

Beth Mix - October 01, 2024 at 09:05 AM

KC

“ Mrs. Poole was my reading consultant many, many years ago when I was in middle school at Vogel-Wetmore in Torrington. I have remembered her all these years because she always had a personalized book recommendation for me, and it was always spot on. I loved getting a pass to her office filled with books! She had a big personality and was no-nonsense, but always smiling and ready to hand over the next great read. I'm lucky to have had known her.
Kelly Reis Carroll

Kelly Carroll - September 29, 2024 at 09:19 AM

DB

“ To the Family of Sayra Poole: we were very sorry to learn of your loved one's passing. Mrs. Poole was our fifth grade teacher at Barkhamsted Elementary School back in the day and we have fond memories of our time there; she was an excellent role model. RIP, Mrs. Poole. With kind regards - David and Bonnie (Germon) Boratko



David and Bonnie Boratko - September 29, 2024 at 08:39 AM

JS

Sayra was a dear friend. We saw eye to eye I. Our approach to working with learners. It was our hope as educators to inspire, to enrich, and to lead students to their highest potentials. It was a joy to be her colleague. It was a greater joy that she was my dear friend. We shared laughs and tears. She was always willing to listen and to support me. I loved her. Judith Shively

Judith Shively - October 17, 2024 at 12:11 AM