

Barbara Young

November 22, 1946 - October 16, 2014



Barb's Life Story

With ways all her own, Barb Young's compassionate and loving nature was the cornerstone of her life. Nurturing goodness naturally flowed from Barb's heart, and it was her very mission to joyfully give of her time and talents in helping others. Never expecting anything in return, Barb's life was enriched in countless ways by those who she came to know and love.

Truly a time of celebration and reflection, the end of World War II found many ready to move forward and begin anew. For Navy man Herbert Griffith Sr. and Margaret (Brooks), who along with their family were stationed at Naval Air Station Coco Solo, Panama Canal Zone, the days following in 1946 could not have been brighter. On November 22, nestled in the tropical Caribbean country of Panama, they welcomed the birth of their darling daughter, Barbara Delores into their hearts.

The third of eventually eight children in the Griffith household, Barbara and her family eventually settled in Jacksonville Beach, Florida prior to the start of her freshman year of high school. Raised alongside her seven siblings, Barbara attended the area schools. She was an outgoing and friendly girl, and a good student at Douglass Anderson High School. Throughout the

summers during high school and college, Barbara and her sisters worked at the Ponte Vedra Beach Club, and Sea Horse Motel for extra money cleaning hotel rooms and working the breakfast buffet.

After graduating from Douglass Anderson High school in 1963, Barb went on to further her education. She attended Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, earning her Bachelor of



Science degree in Food Science and Nutrition. However, it was during a chemistry class when Barb took note of a handsome classmate who caught her attention as being a class clown. Barb and Theodore Young soon made a lasting connection. After dating for a time, talk of marriage entered their plans for the future. During Ted's remaining time in school, Barb returned home to Jacksonville Beach.



With their educations behind them, Barb and Ted were happily married on October 3, 1970 at St. Paul's Church in Jacksonville Beach, FL. They began their new life together as husband and wife, but with little money to spare, there was no allowance for a honeymoon. When Ted secured the position of pharmacist with Bristol Laboratories, they moved to Syracuse, New York. Barb put her educational resources to work and began working for a community program, People's Equal Action and Community Effort (P.E.A.C.E.) which rallied her interest in the field of human services. After two years in Syracuse, they moved down state for a year before settling in Kalamazoo, Michigan for Ted's work with the Upjohn Pharmaceutical Company.

Barb's interest serving her community continued to grow. She began working for another community organization, Kal-Cap, and absolutely loved her work, which no doubt developed into her passion. In time Kal-Cap was integrated with Kalamazoo County Government, and Barb became the acting director, and then director of the Kalamazoo Community Action Agency. A wonderful, productive supervisor, she did it all, and had a way with those in her charge. Although many reported to her, they served together, side-by-side, like a family in the effort of helping others. Barb liked getting the facts in any given circumstance, and made far reaching decisions within her capacity. She was an integral part of forming programs, and assisted in implementing a community co-op garden, food distribution, home weatherization





programs, and a local homeless shelter among others. Within the County, she helped with forming the Head Start program.

It was during this time in Kalamazoo when Barb and Ted were blessed with the birth of their daughter, Keadra in 1980. Barb and Ted had a true partnership in her care. He took her to school each day, and Barb was there to pick her up. Although opposite in nature, Barb and Ted complimented one another.

Throughout the years, Barb formed a loving, tender bond with her daughter, not only as a mother, but also as friend and mentor.

Everyone loved Barb's cooking. Every Wednesday was potluck day at the office, and everyone was eager to put in their "orders" for Barb to bring her delicious banana nut bread, sweet potato pies, lime chicken, chicken salad, or scrumptious pecan pie. She made great casseroles, traditional island dishes, and everyone knew during the holidays, her famous sweet potato and cinnamon rolls were sure to be on the weekly menu. Barb never measured anything, a character trait of her fathers, and if Keadra desired a recipe, she knew she better be quick to jot it down while Barb cooked. She liked her coffee and tea, and always brought extra to the office, but when it came to soda, she only drank Coke. As true creatures of habit, You'd be sure to find Barb and Ted getting ready for their Saturday morning routine of Meijer's to get groceries, followed by breakfast at one of their favorite places. Barb made a good home for her family. She was meticulously clean and tidy, but when it came to decorating, she left that challenge up to Ted and Keadra!

Barb loved flowers, especially mums. She spent time tending to her raised garden beds, which brought her joy. Ted traveled often for work, and Barb loved traveling with him. She particularly liked the cities of Seattle and San Francisco, and did a fair amount of travel for her work, as well. Once





Barb had a travel brochure in hand, she was quick to plan and organize her trip ahead.

After retiring in 2007 when the offices she served underwent reorganization, Barb continued her efforts in helping others. She became a consultant for the State of Michigan's Poverty Reduction Initiative, and most recently, the University Community Empowerment Center at WMU. Barb was like a live wire when it came to scouting out and remaining plugged in to the needs of community. She would have saved the world if she could, yet even so, helped those within her reach at every opportunity. Her passion for giving a voice to the underprivileged and those in poverty was something that she fostered in Keadra; maybe it was all the days she spent doing homework in her mother's office doing homework where she learned that if you've been blessed with a good life, you must share those blessings with others. That was the "Barb way" of paying it forward.

With her endless, giving heart, Barb was excellent at what she did, and always offered her talents in one form or another. In her free time, she loved spending time with her daughter. She and Keadra had a penchant for purses, and often went shopping together at the outlets. She also liked visiting the casinos while Ted played golf, but would never go higher than the nickel slots. For quite some time she played Bingo twice a week. A way for her to relax, she was pretty lucky at it, too! Barb's father, a well versed man, gave her a love for literature and music. She was an avid reader, and did so often. To relax, Barb also enjoyed the sounds of jazz music, and vocals by artist Nancy Wilson, Johnny Mathis and Bebe and Cece Winans.

Barb enjoyed a rather healthy life until this past August when it became evident something was wrong. She was retaining fluid around her lungs, and spent most of her remaining days in the hospital.

Barb Young added much to the lives of others. Through her pleasant demeanor and outgoing, compassionate ways, she gave from





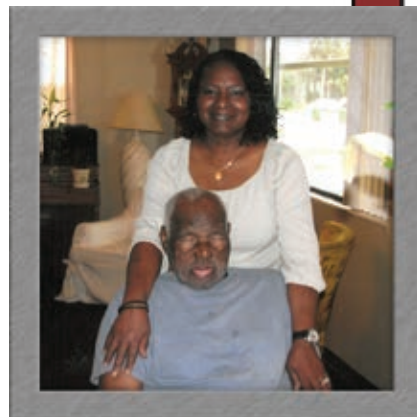
the heart and enlightened the days of many with kindness and a bright smile. Her welcoming spirit never knew a stranger, and she recognized the good in everyone. For these things and more, Barb will be dearly missed.

Barbara D. Young, age 67, of Kalamazoo, died on Thursday, October 16, 2014 in Battle Creek. Members of her family include her husband of 44 years, Dr. Theodore Young; her daughter, Keadra Young (Cory Bogardus); "grandpup", Tyson; her seven siblings: Uriah Griffith, Eloise DeQuintal, Herbert (Bernadine) Griffith, Kenneth (Deborah) Griffith, Arlene (Jimmy) Curl, LaVerne (Randy)

Alleyne, and Leslie (Janice) Griffith; brothers-in-law's, Thermon and Marion Young; many nieces and nephews. Cremation will take place. Services for Barb will be held Friday, October 24, 2014, 11:00AM at the Life Story Funeral Home, Betzler-Kalamazoo, 6080 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo 375-2900 followed by a luncheon in the Life Story Center. Please visit Barb's personal memory page at www.lifestorynet.com where you can share a favorite memory or photo and sign her online guestbook before coming to the funeral home. Memorial contributions may be made to Loaves and Fishes or Kalamazoo Deacon Conference.

Acknowledgements:

The Young and Griffith Families would like to thank all those who offered their many expressions of condolences and love. You have given us support, reassurance and the courage to withstand the pressure of this storm. May God be with you all as He is with Us.



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