



Judie Jo Vayda

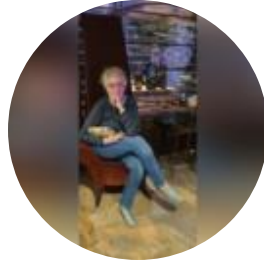
MAR 24, 1942 - DEC 4, 2023



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Judie Jo Vayda

MAR 24, 1942 - DEC 4, 2023

Judie Jo Vayda (Catherwood), known to all who loved her simply as Judie, left us chuckling through our tears on December 4, 2023. Born under the sign of Aries in Johnstown, PA, on March 24, 1942, she was a fiery spirit from the start, blazing a trail all the way to Pittsburgh, PA, where she took her final, peaceful bow.

Judie, a proud alumna of Indiana University of PA, dedicated over three decades of her life to shaping young minds as a much-beloved first-grade teacher at McClelland Elementary School. Her students will remember her not only for her ABCs and 123s but for the countless belly laughs and moments of wonder she provided.

Her son, Devin M Vayda, and her former partner, Daniel M Vayda Ph.D., will undoubtedly continue to share anecdotes of Judie's humor and kindness, keeping her memory alive. Known affectionately as "Mother Nature," Judie had the uncanny ability to commune with all creatures great and small. She could be found whistling with the birds, dining with the deer, and hosting nocturnal gatherings for raccoons, opossums, and skunks. The homeless cats of the neighborhood knew her as the gentle soul who would offer them a warm corner and a loving scratch behind the ears.

While some may remember her for her affinity for slot machines—where she was as generous with her laughter as she was with her quarters—others will recall her strolls along the shore of North Myrtle Beach. There she was, the sea breeze in her hair, her son by her side, both of them collecting seashells and sharing stories, each one more embellished than the last.

People often say that a hearty laugh is the best medicine. If that's true, Judie was a one-woman pharmacy, dispensing joy and jest with the ease of a seasoned comic. She had a knack for seeing the funny side of life, and her laughter was infectious; it was the kind that would start in your belly and roll out in waves, bringing everyone in its path along for the ride.



Obituary

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On the topic of laughter, Judie would have appreciated this little gem from the late, great Phyllis Diller: "Always be nice to your children because they are the ones who will choose your rest home." Now, we're not saying Judie chose her final resting place based on the comedic value, but one can't help but wonder if she'd appreciate the humor in the idea.

If you knew Judie, you'd say she was loving, funny, and generous to a fault—someone who would give you the shirt off her back, or at least a witty quip to keep you warm. As we look back on her life, it's clear that the world was her stage, and every day was an improv scene met with enthusiasm and a punchline ready at hand.

So, let's raise a glass (preferably with a little umbrella in it, just as she liked) to Judie. Let's celebrate a life lived with gusto, a heart given freely, and a sense of humor that could tickle even the grumpiest of souls. For as long as we continue to share her stories, to laugh at her jokes, and to find joy in the little things—as she so often did—Judie's spirit will remain an indelible part of this world she has left a bit brighter.

Judie Jo Vayda (Catherwood), here's to you. You taught us that life doesn't have to be serious to be seriously well-lived. And for that, we are forever grateful.

Family and friends are welcome on Thursday, December 14, 2023 from 2 to 4 & 6 to 8 pm at the Jefferson Memorial Funeral Home, Inc., 301 Curry Hollow Road, Pittsburgh, 15236.

A Funeral Service will be held on Friday, December 15, 2023 at 10 am in the funeral home's chapel.

Online condolences may be shared at www.jeffersonmemorial.com.



Tribute Wall

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Luann Kayser posted:

My memories of Judie, loud, funny, generous, loyal, caring. The cat lady of the neighborhood (in a good way), Tarzan yelling, best customer I could ever have had the pleasure of doing for more than 35 years. I will miss you!

January 29 at 3:19 PM



Anonymous posted:

We remember all the fun times we had together as children. We miss you Judie Jo. In Loving Memory Your Cousins Neil and Gail Ober

December 17 at 5:04 PM



Sean Mekkelsen & Wanda Wyborski posted:

We are so very sorry for your loss my friend.

December 14 at 2:45 PM



Anonymous posted:

With thoughts of peace and courage for you. But lets also add in just a tiny bit of eff you :)

December 13 at 12:36 PM



Devin Vayda posted:

Luv ya lots Mom!! See you again one day...❤️❤️

December 11 at 6:04 PM



Dorothy C Hrishenko posted:

To my best friend We had so many laughs together. Will miss you.

December 10 at 11:24 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Judie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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