



Ellen Nora Kniss Becker Sable

APR 15, 1934 - JUL 23, 2021



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Sadly, very sadly and surprisingly, long admired and loved, daughter, sister, mother, sister-in-law, aunt, friend and neighbor, Ellen Nora Sable passed peacefully on Friday evening July 23, 2021. A shock and tragedy to some and a relief of suffering by others.

Ellen, born in April of 1934 to William H. Kniss and his wife, Emily Agnes Priest Kniss. Ellen enjoyed her growing up on the slopes of Pittsburgh's South Side. She enjoyed gardening and learning to sew and "scrimp & save", and raise Chickens from a Depression Era mother. She attended Pittsburgh Public Schools in the Arlington area and graduated from South High school in 1952...in the midst of the Korean War. At South High she was interested in drama and theater and participated in class events. Her fast friend, among others, was a Jewish girl from Squirrel Hill named Shirley Klowanski, they hung around with each other regularly, even though her mother, Emily, had to move the family into public housing, i.e., "the projects". She always wanted to be a Nurse because her mother had gone to nursing school and took care of infants at the famous Zoar Home for unwed mothers in the East End. Ellen also wanted to join the US Air Force and be that nurse that her mother exemplified. However, her mother would not permit it because of the fear of losing her daughter in a hot Asian war. Frustrated by this Ellen had already been involved in a high school program for young women at 17 years old to work part time for the local telephone company...Bell Telephone Company of PA. She became a part time Switchboard Operator. Little did she know after graduating that she would do this job for almost 22 years before moving up to an administrative position in Bell Headquarters of which she served another 10 years before taking retirement in 1980. One of Ellen's driving forces in life was to be an independent working woman and provide for herself. Her heroine's were Scarlet O'Hara from the movie Gone With The Wind (life guiding quote: "...I will NEVER be HUNGRY again!"), and the



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Hollywood Blonde Bomb Shell, Veronica Lake....she often mimicked her signature hair style of having one long strand of her hair covering her right eye.

Ellen married in 1955 to a young guy named Robert M. Becker from Morning Side, having recently finished his service in the US Marine Corp. Later she gave birth to a girl, Celestine Ellen Becker who was quickly to be called 'Tina'. Ellen continued to work not giving up her dream of being an independent woman who had resources and was self sufficient. Though a child of the 50's Ellen had a strong will to succeed after watching her mother struggle to raise a family of three after experiencing her father being institutionalized by Schizophrenia.

Ellen's first marriage failed however, but she went on and worked to co-raise Tina. In 1967 though she remarried a guy in the very Bell Telephone Company that she worked. He was a few years younger and had previously completed his US Navy service as a Submariner cruising for long periods of time under water in the Pacific during the Cold War. They settled in the West View neighborhood of Pittsburgh and both worked and with Ellen's "Wanderlust" traveling all over the the country, by plane and by motorhome. She took her aging mother on a number of trips...to Texas and Hawaii. Ellen continued her quest for travel into her later years with trips to Mexica, to Europe (especially England, her heritage dream!), and to China. She traveled with her fellow Senior Dorothy Weaver to extended stays in Kentucky and Tennessee to be educated at local crafts schools doing lace embroidery and pottery. She collected Egyptian artifacts of all types...Obelisks, Pyramids and Pharaoh busts. She was inquisitive and read a lot, collecting books and journals and medical magazines of all types. Ellen contributed to many causes and charities from the ACLU to animal welfare and environmental preservation groups.

She continued working long after her Bell retirement at the Pitt Book Store and then at Staiger's Tax Service on the North Side. Ellen was always interested in voting and especially in women registering and voting....she served many times at Polling Places on the South Side and elsewhere. Forced to actually retire and stop working in 2014 at the age of 82, she focused on tending her garden on her large garden and lot on Ottillia street where she lived in her own home with 3 apartments in and grew a variety of vegetables, including Strawberries & Raspberries.... in addition to having



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large bushes full of Elderberries!

Two goals of notable accomplishment were that she was a financially independent woman, having saved and invested; and that she was generally in good health having been a very long advocate of taking mega-vitamins. She had no chronic diseases and boasted about, at 87, that she was still on track in her life long goal of reaching 100 years of age!

Sadly however, that was not to be, besides being slowed by age, she started to be effected by memory loss and was diagnosed with Dementia in 2018. The precipitate slide was startling, frustrating, frightening and life depreciating! A more harrowing experience a human being should not have to endure! But endure she did and was courageous in fighting back and wanting to still live independently. Even the loss of her beloved little black cat "Boo-Kitty" in early 2021 did not completely stop her, but the utter destructive Dementia and increased immobility and other age problems did and she passed after an almost one week struggle in the hospital, ICU, Palliative and then Hospice care!

Ellen is survived by her Daughter Tina/Celestine Becker of Pittsburgh, PA; her brother George Kniss and Sister-In-Law Vera Kniss of Moon Township, PA; her Niece, Adrienne Kniss Kohutt Loeffler of Shallotte, NC; Niece, Kristin Kniss MLay Kuhns of Latrobe, PA; her 2nd Ex-Husband, Paul Sable of Locante, FL; and Niece, Susan Bronder of Baldwin.

Visitation will be Friday, July 30, 2021 from 11 AM- 2:30PM at the Jefferson Memorial Funeral Home, 301 Curry Hollow Road, Pleasant Hills, PA 15236. A graveside service will follow at 2:30 PM in Jefferson Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, it is requested that consideration be given to donations to any one of the many organizations that Ellen supported over the years including the following: Friends Of The Earth, SPCA, PETA, GREENPEACE, The Sierra Club, The ACLU, Defenders Of Wildlife, Doctors Without Borders, The American Red Cross, The League Of Women Voters, Planned Parenthood, The Democratic Party, and many Native American groups.



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A LIFE WELL LIVED AND KNOWN FOR HER OFTEN ANONYMOUS and UNDER APPRECIATED GENEROSITY!



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Laurene And Rick James And Ryan , Emily & Carlye posted:

Our thoughts and prayers with all of Aunt Ellens friends and family . You are missed more than you know. Love you, Aunt Ellen.

July 30 at 4:07 AM



William Carter posted:

I have very fond memories of Aunt Ellen through my childhood through my teen years. Ellen was my mom's backup support throughout her life.

July 28 at 4:47 AM



Adrienne Kniss Kohut Lefler posted:

I am shocked and very very saddened at the news of my Aunt Ellen's passing. She was simply amazing, independent, generous and kind. We always kept in touch over all the years with cards, letters, visits and I loved being able to take her on a vacation to the Outer Banks of NC one year at Thanksgiving! I have a meriad of memories and lessons learned from this woman both bright and beautiful! She will always be a part of me in my heart and mind. Sincere condolences to my much adored Cousin Tina, Aunt Vera and Uncle George. I wish I could be there with you, but my Mother's poor health keeps me here in North Carolina. My heart aches for my Aunt Ellen and all of You! Love, Adrienne Kniss Kohut Lefler.

July 27 at 10:49 AM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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