



Barbara Towne Ducat

December 5, 1960 - May 28, 2025

Barbara Towne Ducat passed away on the morning of May 28, 2025, in the home where she lovingly raised her children in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She was a beloved wife, mother, sister, aunt, and friend to countless people worldwide. Her life was one of immense accomplishment marked by academic and professional excellence, a deep curiosity about the world, and care for all the communities that were a part of her life.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, June 21 at 11:00 a.m. at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. Visitation will begin at 10:00 a.m., and a gathering with refreshments will follow the service.

Barb was born on December 5, 1960, in Harlan, Iowa, as the youngest of four to Max and Jean Towne and was raised in Kimballton and Elk Horn. From a young age, she was determined to explore beyond her small hometown, see the world, and build a life on her own terms. She graduated valedictorian from Elk Horn High School and went on to earn her Bachelor of Business degree in Accounting from Iowa State University. In 2004, she earned her MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business while balancing a demanding career and family life.

After graduating from Iowa State, Barb began her career at Cargill, where she spent over 13 years in global roles. Her work took her around the world,

enabling her to build a highly successful career and develop a lifelong passion for travel. She spent months at a time working abroad in places like Thailand and Australia, fostering unique experiences that included being caught in a military coup in Thailand and conducting undercover investigations during the Croatian War while based in Hong Kong. Barb ultimately traveled to 39 countries across six continents and visited all 50 U.S. states.

Following her time at Cargill, Barb held senior and executive roles at many companies, including Associated British Foods, Tyco, SuperValu, HomeRiver Group, Twin City Fan, Classic Collision, and others. She was a visionary senior leader whose career had a lasting impact on every organization she touched, distinguished by her commitment to people and culture, ability to build high-performing teams, championing of diversity, and her earning of top leadership recognition and awards. In 2021, at the recommendation of lifelong friend and former colleague Bev Franklin, Barb joined the board of directors at Sabathani Community Center in South Minneapolis, serving as chair of the finance committee. Her dedication to others was unwavering, whether on a global stage or in her local community.

Barb retired in 2022, looking forward to a time filled with travel, family, and giving back. However, in January 2024, her plans were upended when she was diagnosed with ALS, the same disease that had taken her brother, Steve, in 2017. The disease progressed rapidly, stripping away the independence that had defined her. She eventually lost the ability to walk, use her hands, speak, and eat. Yet she faced each stage with the same strength, dignity, and determination she had shown throughout her life. Despite her immense pain, Barb devoted her final chapter to raising awareness and funds for ALS research. Her goal was to ensure that the next generation of her family, her friends, and society would not suffer from this devastating disease.

As part of her legacy, Barb established a 10-year scholarship program in her

hometown of Elk Horn, Iowa, to provide high school students with the opportunity to pursue the kind of meaningful work and adventure that she herself embodied. Her influence also inspired the creation of the Barb Towne Ducat ALS Legacy of Care Program, founded by her care team leader, Patti O'Connor of Elevare. The initiative partners with students in healthcare fields to provide hands-on care for individuals living with ALS, combining education, compassion, and advocacy in honor of Barb.

Barb will be remembered not only for her accomplishments and travel but for the strength and grace she brought to every challenge. Her wisdom, generosity, and courage will live on in the lives she touched and the legacy she leaves behind.

She is survived by her husband, Michael, with whom she had just celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary, and their children, Samuel and Grace. She is also survived by her brother Bruce, wife Terry, and his children Megan, Greg, Kirstin, and Maria, and their mother Laurie; her sister Carol and her children David, Mark, and Janet; the children of her late brother Steve, Jeff and Andrea; and many other nieces, nephews, brothers- and sisters-in-law, and friends who became like family.

In lieu of flowers, we kindly ask that you honor Barb by supporting her final mission and donating to her ALS fundraising page: https://secure2.convio.net/alsa/site/TR/DIY/NationalOffice?px=9236326&pg=personal&fr_id=16211

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 21. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Central Lutheran Church (Mpls)
333 South 12th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Memorial Service

JUN 21. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Central Lutheran Church (Mpls)
333 South 12th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Tribute Wall

VG

“ *As relatively new neighbors, our interactions with Barbara were limited. But she always had time for a warm smile and greeting while busy with yard work. It is only now, belatedly, that we recognize that she was not only a kind neighbor but a remarkable woman. What an amazing life she led: so rich in professional accomplishments, so diverse in travel and experiences, and so overflowing with generosity for others! We celebrate her life and mourn your loss.*

-- Divya & Vinay

Vinay Gidwani - June 21, 2025 at 10:27 AM

SR

“ I was deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Barb. I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Ducat family and loved ones during this difficult time.

Barb will be remembered for her warmth, her kind spirit, and the genuine care she showed to everyone around her. Sabathani Community Center will always remember her ability to bring balance, strength, and the quiet ways she made people feel seen and appreciated. She left a lasting impression on our Board and to the many community members we serve, and her presence will be sorely missed.

Please know that you are in our thoughts, and I hope you find comfort in the memories you shared with her and the legacy of kindness she leaves behind.

With sympathy,

Scott Redd/Sabathani Board of Directors

Scott Redd - June 20, 2025 at 06:23 PM

EF

“ I had the great fortune of knowing Barb during our time working together at Cargill, where our paths first crossed. It was during a leadership program that I truly came to appreciate the remarkable person she was—someone whose presence could light up any room and whose conversations were always a source of joy and insight.

Barb had that rare gift of carrying a genuine smile that reflected the warmth of her spirit.

When Barb courageously shared her ALS diagnosis, my heart was heavy with sadness for what lay ahead. Yet almost immediately, that sorrow gave way to something else entirely—a profound sense of pride in witnessing how she chose to face this challenge.

Her involvement with the ALS Legacy of Care program was a testament to who Barb truly was—someone who, even in the face of her own struggles, found ways to support and uplift others.

Barb's memory will live on in my mind and heart, a constant reminder of what it means to face life's challenges with dignity.

I am honored to have known such an amazing person, and I will carry the lessons of her courage, her kindness, and her spirit with me always.

Thank you, Barb

Eddy Fay - June 19, 2025 at 05:41 PM

DS

“ Barb and I travelled a lot before she met Michael - both domestically and internationally...London, Paris, Miami, Seattle, Washington DC, Key West, Munich, Amsterdam...but one trip was really great - Bali. Especially the day we hired a car and driver. Bali villages are organized by artisan - one silver, next carvings, another batik, etc. Our driver was excellent and shared the secret - take us to places where they would price higher. So he took us to a variety of places and was very friendly. On the way back to our hotel, he asked if it was ok to stop at his home. Today I would think twice about it but then we said "sure". He had a very clean home that he shared with his wife, new baby and mother. One large living space and one bedroom. He was a very good marketer. Barb and I tipped him almost equal to the fee! Travel was important to Barb and I know Michael, Barb and the family did a lot of it. Very good memories!

Deborah Simkin - June 13, 2025 at 10:56 PM

BF

“ Barb was a brilliant professional, and a wonderful friend. I was so grateful that she accepted my invitation to consider a seat on Sabathani's Board. I will be forever grateful for the dedicated time, knowledge and wisdom she shared. She will be missed. Deepest Condolences to her Family and Friends.

Beverly Franklin - June 09, 2025 at 04:45 PM

BW

“ Michael, Sam and Grace, my sincerest sympathies. The love and care Barb showed for each of you was obvious. Barb and I met at Cargill in 1984 and began what turned into a life long friendship, working, traveling, socializing and laughing! Barb's friendship of care, integrity and trust meant the world to me. Love, Brad

Brad Williams - June 09, 2025 at 11:03 AM