



Nancy Beth Nordgren

October 30, 1954 - July 12, 2021

Nancy B. Nordgren, age 66, of St. Paul, died July 12, 2021, suddenly and unexpectedly of complications from ovarian cancer.

Nancy was born Oct. 30, 1954, in Olivia, MN, to William and Marcella (Nelson) Nordgren. The family moved to St. James in 1963, after her dad accepted a job as sports writer for the St. James Plaindealer. He later became the editor, and Nancy followed her dad's journalism bent at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, where she majored in German and joined the staff of the Gustavian Weekly. She credited a J-term trip to Boston in 1975 to analyze the school integration issue that was tearing Boston apart at the time as the catalyst to her long career as a journalist. It was "an eye-opening, heart-wrenching experience for this naïve, white Midwestern 20-year-old," she said.

Nancy was a proud print journalist, who often said she related to Mary Richards, the Mary Tyler Moore TV show character who broke many barriers in the newsroom. After college, she was hired at the Mankato Free Press, where she worked as a copyeditor, styled her hair to look like Billie Newman on the "Lou Grant" show and played second base for the paper's beer league softball team, the Typos. She made the paper's sports page once for hitting a triple and clinching the game. She moved to Washington in 1981 to work as assistant news editor at the Everett Herald. She joined that newsroom's softball team and helped it win a media league championship, scoring the

golden trophy - a spray-painted typewriter - that graced the newsroom for years.

She returned to Minnesota in 1989 to work for the Star Tribune and had two stints there: first, from 1989 to 2007, working as assistant city editor, copy editor and layout editor. She took a buyout in 2007 and worked as a freelance editor until she returned in 2013, bringing her cheerfulness, compassion and encyclopedic knowledge of almost all things to the newsroom and editorial pages. Colleagues described her as a "crackerjack copy editor," "a true professional," "joyful, kind and brilliant." She retired in 2019.

Nancy loved music (all kinds), sports, travel, the North Shore and most of all, her two sons, Will and Ted Olsen, who remarkably were born in 1987 and 1991, respectively, the two years that her favorite baseball team, the Minnesota Twins, won the World Series. Nancy inherited her love of music from her musician parents and grew up playing clarinet and singing in choirs through high school, college and at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church. She played for many years in the St. Anthony Park Community Band. She passed that love onto Will and Ted, who are both accomplished musicians. She tried not to miss their performances, whether they wanted parental viewing or not, and that meant she often snuck into the back at Will's shows at the Hexagon or Triple Rock. She was proud of helping make them well-rounded adults (their words).

Nancy squeezed in many adventures in the five years after her cancer diagnosis; the last was a vacation to Colorado with her high school classmate and newfound travel buddy and companion, Bill Fossum. They had just returned when her health diminished.

Nancy loved people, didn't gossip, rarely said a bad word about others. The year 2016 dealt many blows to her, but she aspired to be positive and took the

advice of the 1927 Max Ehrmann poem, the Desiderata, given to her by Bill during their senior year at St. James High School: "With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy." And she did.

Nancy was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her sons; sisters, Kathy (Bryon) Christenson and Peg (Phred) Young; nieces and nephews, Holly Young, John Young, Ben (Becky) Christenson, Peter (Emily) Christenson and Erin (Aaron) Christenson; grandnephew and grandnieces, Aedan Sannes, Layla Young, and Stella and Lucy Christenson; Aunt Pattiann Nordgren; the angel that flew from Moose Lake, Bill Fossum; Corah, her kitty; former in-laws, nieces and nephews on the Olsen side; and a list of friends that would take up the whole metro section of the Strib, including the Gustavus Goddesses, her book club, the BBB, Pelican Nation, ACES buddies, her MOCA and Teal sisters, and countless St. James, college and newspaper pals.

Her parting words for all of you: Life is short. Take the trip. Buy the shoes. Eat the cake.

A memorial service will be held Tuesday, July 27, at 2 p.m. at Lakewood Cemetery Chapel. In lieu of flowers, consider making a donation in Nancy's name to the Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance, mnovarian.org.

FUNERAL LINK

<https://vimeo.com/event/1153156/5df0c7d7d1>

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUL **27**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Lakewood Memorial Chapel
3600 Hennepin Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Tribute Wall

SP

“ *I graduated from Olivia high school where I was a cheerleader. I helped make her (at least I think it was her) a cheerleader mascot because she liked the cheerleaders. I got a note from her Mom Marcy about how we had made a little girl so happy. I think there is a picture of her in her cheerleader outfit. It may have been in the Olivia times.*

sandra taylor pletcher - July 18, 2021 at 03:44 PM