

Janet B. Wagner

MARCH 6, 1931 – JANUARY 31, 2022

Janet Louise Bankert Wagner (Jan) died peacefully and in total rest at the Houston Hospice on January 31, 2022, following a long battle with Alzheimer's Dementia. She was born on March 6, 1931, in Hanover, Pa to Emma Miller Bankert and Earl Lester Bankert. Jan was preceded in death by her parents and sister, Evelyn.

She is survived by her husband of 70 years; daughter Kim Wagner Neuendorff (Tom) with children Jessie (Jake), Emma, and Charles; daughter Susan Wagner Walton (David) with children Emily (Seth), Michael (Allie), and Ben (Kirsten); son David (Karen) with children Jackson (Melissa) and McKenna; son John (Alisa) with children Luke (Emily), Jake (Sarah) and Zack and six great-grandchildren Evelyn, Anne, Avery, Peyton, Hugh, and Miller.

From her earliest days, she had an abiding interest in the arts. As a child, she organized playmates to "perform skits" in her backyard charging safety pins for entry. She loved reading, writing poetry, singing, creating, and acting in plays. In her high school of over 2000 students, she was well known for encouraging classmates to participate and act in plays. Her "homeroom" was in the office of the faculty member responsible for Thespian and fine art activities. She was Captain of the Cheerleading team and held leadership roles in her high school Literary Society. Jan always wanted to play piano but on the heels of the Great Depression costs were prohibitive for her parents. They instead bought her a Hawaiian guitar and she teamed with two other girls to become "The Chickadees of Waikiki". As a mother, she played the ukulele and led the family in singing while traveling in the car and on camping trips. Jan graduated from Wm. Penn Senior High School in York, Pa in 1949 and then from Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in Baltimore, Maryland, class of 1952. When attending Johns Hopkins nursing school, she teamed with two classmates forming a singing trio to entertain both in the hospital and on Baltimore radio. Nursing school required many clinical hours as part of the training program in all specialties at Johns Hopkins Hospital, and if the students worked more time, they were paid \$0.75 per hour. That extra money became the source of buying dishes and silverware in preparation for marriage after graduation. In July of 1952, she married Donald Wagner with whom she had gone to high school where they met and dated. She "entered" the U.S. Air Force with Don during the Korean War. Jan loved clinical nursing and particularly the field of Obstetrics. She worked in the USAF Hospital at Randolph AFB, the Nix Hospital in downtown San Antonio and then with an obstetrician in his private practice until 1955. That year her Air Force journey opened an entirely new phase as she was "transferred" with Don to London, England, then to RAF Station Bentwaters near the North Sea. Her first two children were born in England: Kim in London and Susan at U.S. Air Force Hospital Wimpole Park near Cambridge, England.

The family returned to Texas for Don to go to graduate school at Baylor University and then to residency in Tampa, Florida where David was born. Following graduate education, the family returned to San Antonio where John was born. Exciting experiences and opportunities came as the family lived in Washington, DC, Wiesbaden Germany, San Antonio, Wichita Falls, and again San Antonio. Given the absence of a “hometown” for the family, Jan made certain to establish a “home home” nurturing the children to provide stability in a transient military life. This was a special challenge while in Germany as Don’s job required extensive absence from home while traveling throughout the Air Force European Command. While living in Wiesbaden Jan began taking art lessons from a German artist. Her natural talent and high interest in painting blossomed to a superb level of skill. She painted commercially and taught others. Jan painted three portraits of dignitaries of the AF Medical Service which hang in various Air Force galleries. She enjoyed making pottery on free-wheel and in molds and creating stained glass pictures. She envisioned, wrote, performed, and directed numerous fun skits both in the Air Force and in Houston. She sang in the choir, taught Sunday school and Vacation Bible School in Base Chapel. She was active in leadership with the Bible Study Fellowship International program based in San Antonio. Jan volunteered for a role in every neighborhood and school activity for all the children - from PTA to sports to music lessons to scouting. She excelled in supporting her girls in the sale of Girl Scout cookies – and in the eating of them.

Her last household move was to Houston Texas in 1982 where earlier pursuits in the arts continued. She became a Master Gardener, did the landscaping for her housing community, and was President of both the Garden Club and Homeowners Association. This included decorating the housing division entrances at Christmas for over 25 years. All of this activity was secondary to her best-loved role as a Mother, Grandmother, and Great Grandmother where she was an ever-present teacher and cheerleader. Jan will be interred at the Veterans Administration National Cemetery in Houston.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to The University of Texas Medical Branch - for the Brain Health - Alzheimer’s Disease Fund. Address: UTMB Development Services, 301 University Blvd. Galveston, Tx 77555-0148

Contributions can also be made Online at:<https://development.utmb.edu/give>
Alternatively, donations are suggested to Houston Hospice, 1905 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, Texas 77030.