



Barbara Jane McDowell

November 8, 1944 - July 9, 2021

On a warm and sunny July afternoon, Barbara Jane McDowell slipped away from those who loved her so very much. Barbara was born on November 8, 1944 and died on July 9, 2021. She was preceded in death by her parents, William and Jane McDowell and her beloved brother, John McDowell. In addition, she leaves her dearest friend Norma Macklin and Norma's family, including Norma's sister Jean and Jean's children, grandchildren and great granddaughter. She also leaves her Grand Rapids family: Marlene Downes, Kathy Downes Lewis, Marcella Downes Wesche and Barbara Downes O'Malley and their children and grandchildren. Barb graduated from Michigan State University and started her teaching career at Warren Woods in 1966, serving the district for forty-three years. During her career at Warren Woods, she served as president of the WWEA and was a delegate to the NEA conventions. She was a fighter for social justice and worked especially hard supporting women's equality.

Barb was a Spartan fanatic and loved attending football and basketball games. She especially loved her trips to the Bowl games and her yearly trips to the Big Ten Basketball Tournament. Barb was a strong, intelligent, and caring woman and took great pride in her profession. She will be greatly missed, but her memory will remain with us forever. Friends and family are asked to consider donations to MSU College of Education, University Development, 535 Chestnut Road, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Tribute Wall

JS

“ I was a teacher in the Warren Woods district but I taught at the high school. Fortunately, my friends were elementary school teachers and I was able to spend time with Barb and Norma. I remember her laugh the most. She was a caring and thoughtful woman and the world will be a sadder place without her. Rest in peace Barb, and God bless you.

Judy Stone and Dan Stone

Judy Stone - July 19, 2021 at 01:55 PM

CB

“ I am so sorry to hear of Barb's passing. Sending love to Norma, her family, and all of the many friends who knew her and loved her. Rest in peace.

Colleen Badgley - July 17, 2021 at 01:17 PM

JM

“ Barb was one of the first people I met at Briarwood and I knew immediately that her and I would have great times together and we did!

JoAnn McClain - July 15, 2021 at 09:49 PM

KW

“ *Barb was a wonderful Family friend.
All three of my Children had her for third grade and she was the best.
Barb attended all three of their Graduation parties, showers, and weddings.
Barb you will totally be missed. May the Lord hold you in the palm of his hands.
Norma, may you find comfort and peace. And may your memories of Barb give you comfort and strength.
Rest In Peace Barb.*

Karen Wood - July 15, 2021 at 08:42 PM

LR

“ *Ms. McDowell...my second grade teacher and she was the best!! I have such fond memories of her class. It was a long time ago, but so special that I will never forget. 💜 May she Rest In Peace!!!*

Lucy Rossi - July 15, 2021 at 08:33 PM

LB

“ *Barb was a kind and inspirational woman. She will be missed.
Sending prayers for family and friends!*

Lynnsey Burke - July 15, 2021 at 07:43 PM

KM

“ I have great childhood memories of cousin Barb, and later memories of the committed teacher and activist whose visits my parents loved to tell me about. But the memory I treasure best is one of Barb at Dad’s funeral, telling the story her mother told about her little brother, too young for school himself, who picked the neighbors’ flowers and walked several blocks to her teacher’s house to ask her not to make his sister cry any more, prompting Barb to become the kind of teacher of whom a child would dare to ask such a thing. I laughed and cried and grew even more proud to be of the tribe of Halls. Thank you, Barb!

Kathleen Hall Mavournin - July 15, 2021 at 07:43 PM

MG

Barb was such a wonderful person helping me with understanding my role as past president of the AFT. She was always there to help and answer questions. My the Lord hold you in his hand. Sending prayers to you Norma and her family

Michelle Grabowski - July 18, 2021 at 11:08 AM

CO

“ Barb was such a great teacher and friend. I remember when I first started in Warren Woods, we were both in third grade and she had so many helpful tips and tricks. I also enjoyed many fun dinners with lots of cocktails with Barb, Norma and Deanna. Such great times! RIP Barb ❤️🙏

courtney - July 15, 2021 at 07:23 PM

DP

“ Barb was definitely an original Strong in her beliefs. Could tell a good story. So fun to be with. She will be Missed.

Debbie Paliczuk - July 15, 2021 at 07:06 PM

SD

“ So many memories with you and Norma. Trips to Purdue football games with everyone and the dog in the van. All the dinners where we met you and Norma. I always waited to get kicked out because we laughed so loud. The time you were called to Brunn’s office cause you were in trouble. I wrote you a poem about it and I think you still had it last time I saw you. Such a wonderful friend for you and Norma to come all the way for my son’s wedding in California. Such a great third grade teacher who we made friends with back then. We had so many laughs with you and Norma! You will always be one of my husband’s “girls”! Norma you know who the other one is! Hope I see you Barb in the afterlife so we can continue with the laughs and maybe even unionize the angels. 🙏🙏 We’ll miss u so much.

sharon drozdowski - July 15, 2021 at 05:46 PM

SD

“ 1 file added to the album *Wedding in California*



sharon drozdowski - July 15, 2021 at 05:35 PM

LD

“ My family and I have so many wonderful memories of Barb. All of the great times we had at Briarwood, especially in the teacher's lounge! My daughter, Cheryl, was in her third grade class. Barb always insisted on healthy snacks for for the students' birthdays. Barb always came to any event she was invited to, graduation parties, wedding showers, weddings and baby showers. She was always very generous! We considered her a close family friend. You will be greatly missed, my friend! Rest in peace.

Linda Dotterer - July 15, 2021 at 05:16 PM

KB

“ Barb loved her Spartans! I remember running into you both in Indy for the big ten tournament even though Ron and I were not rooting for Sparty Barb always made us feel welcome. Barb had such a wonderful sense of humor and she was such a supporter of her friends and colleagues. I pray for you Norma as you mourn your dear friend. I'm so glad to have known Barb. May God bring you comfort and peace.

Kelly Bugaj - July 15, 2021 at 05:12 PM

KP

“ I have wonderful memories of Barb as a co-worker, and as my son and daughter's 3rd grade teacher. Her laugh carried through the halls of Briarwood! Thinking of you Norma as you mourn. 🙏

Karen Petrella - July 15, 2021 at 04:13 PM

EK

“ I grew up across the street from the McDowells on Woodland in Royal Oak. We neighbor kids swam in their built-in pool many times. Barb was quite a bit older than me, but I remember her pretty hair, green Pontiac convertible, and that she was a teacher. I'm sorry to know that her brother has passed also. My condolences to her friend family.

Ellen Eskola Kehoe - July 15, 2021 at 09:20 AM

MK

“ Dear Norma. So sorry for your loss. I have such wonderful memories of Barb and Johbby Doug at Lake Michigan and at Grandpa Hall's farm. Then later your joint visits to MN to see my parents. My Dad was do proud of both you and Barb, your commitment to your careers and colleagues. Hold tight to your memories during these difficult days.
Missy Hall Klucas

Missy Klucas - July 14, 2021 at 11:04 AM

CH

“ Dear Norma and Family,
I am so sorry for your loss of Barb and hope for comfort and peace to hold you close during these hard days. May all the wonderful memories of the beautiful person Barb was help to ease the pain of losing her.

Claire Hall

Claire J Hall - July 14, 2021 at 10:41 AM

KI

I have very fond memories of this feisty, funny, outspoken advocate. We were Union Presidents together for many years and I respected her loyalty and commitment to that difficult and thankless job. She was loads of fun and did it all with class & sass 💕 You will be missed friend.

KimFarnum - July 15, 2021 at 07:31 PM

JN

*Dear Norma & Family.
My sincere deepest sympathy for your loss. May God's Angels hold you & comfort you during these times. May your many memories with Barb bring you much comfort and peace.*

Joyce Nietupski

Joyce Nietupski - July 15, 2021 at 08:03 PM