



Joanne Haveles Burke

June 17, 1944 - March 27, 2022

Joanne Haveles Burke died on March 27 with family at her side at St. Joseph Medical Center in Bellingham, Washington – a small city in the northwest corner of the state.

Her family is working to arrange the construction, placement and dedication of a memorial bench to mark her passing and to honor her life in the area of Manzanita, Oregon – her favorite place and the town she chose to make her home.

Born Joanne James Haveles in June of 1944 at Day Kimball Hospital in Putnam, Connecticut to Mary and James Haveles, Joanne grew up on Peckham Lane in Danielson, Connecticut. She graduated from Killingly High School and began her first career as a registered nurse after earning a degree from Newport Hospital School of Nursing in Rhode Island.

Her life carried her far afield from her hometown and the New England community in which she was raised after she met and married a U.S. Navy Sailor. They had two children together, and over the years and through several assignments, the Burke family called many places in the contiguous United States home, including towns and bases in California, New Jersey, Virginia, Connecticut, Colorado, and Washington State.

After Joanne and her husband divorced, she remained in Gig Harbor, Washington. There, she raised her children as they completed their years in the same primary and secondary schools. It was very important to Joanne that her kids stay in one place to finish their schooling after having to move frequently for the Navy. At this time, she left hospital nursing and began a new career path. Joanne worked as a school librarian at Gig Harbor High School and, after earning a degree in business management, as an assistant to the vice principal at the school.

Throughout her time in Gig Harbor, Joanne made a point of putting together enough money in as many years as she could manage to take her children to the Oregon Coast for a stay in Cannon Beach during the summer. It came as no surprise her chosen home in retirement was a beautiful town not far south of Haystack Rock.

Once her children had graduated high school, Joanne launched a new phase in her career as an executive assistant for research projects and therapeutic drug development at two major pharmaceutical companies. The first company was based in downtown Seattle and the other on Lake Washington. With her new career she also made a new home, at the base of Capitol Hill – for her, a comfortable walk to work on a sunny day.

Although her children had moved away from home, Joanne held fast to her lifelong dream of taking them to Greece and visiting the village that was the ancestral home of her family. In 1998, she brought her son and daughter to Greece for a month of exploring the Peloponnese and islands. Highlights of the family trip included a stay with Joanne's God Parents on the island of Spetses, and a remarkable visit to and tour of the home in which generations of Joanne's family had been raised – all thanks to a chance encounter on a sidewalk with an inquisitive friend of Joanne's cousin from Athens, Christos, who happened to be in the tiny village of Spartharis at the time with his wife,

and was taking care of the old stone house for the family.

Joanne was an amazing baker and cook. She made the best pies, fudge, baklava and other Greek pastries. Her meals were always full of flavor, fresh vegetables and her garden grown herbs – all cooked with love. She had a passion for gardening and always kept a beautifully landscaped yard with flowers blooming. Fresh cut flowers arranged in a crystal vase were a must. She often kept the flowers on the kitchen counter, as this was the room she spent the most time in. She was an adept seamstress and made and mended many clothes for the family over the years, as well sewing traditional Greek costumes for the Greek folk dance group in which her children participated. Joanne knit beautifully and did some needlepoint design in her younger years, as well creating stained glass art and ceramics. She loved spending time puttering around antique stores and artisan markets, always admiring beauty in unique pieces that often found their way home with her.

Her work ethic, dedication, professionalism and aptitude earned her the respect of the people she worked with and of those she worked for throughout her career. When corporate circumstances dictated a change of companies in Seattle, she transitioned seamlessly to a new pharmaceutical research and development operation where she was once again counted as a valuable asset, a trusted colleague in the leadership team, and a personal friend.

Her new position brought her to San Francisco, where she lived in Noe Valley for several years and worked a short distance away at the company's research facility on the bay. Her time in San Francisco was focused on work and enjoying the area in which she lived. Although she kept her house in Seattle as a rental throughout her time in the Bay Area, her heart had returned to the Oregon Coast.

Upon retirement, she sold her house in Seattle to the family who had been renting it and raising their child there while Joanne was living in San Francisco. Joanne moved into her townhouse in Manzanita. Her dream of walking to the beach every day had finally come true.

In Manzanita, Joanne discovered her friend and faithful companion Callie through a local animal rescue group. Together, they had many amazing years of long walks on beautiful beaches and coastal trails along the Pacific Ocean, weekends and weekdays filled with local farmers' markets, group hikes with friends, home cooking and excellent meals, taking classes and attending events at the Hoffman Center, volunteer service at the Pine Grove Community House, and visits and holidays with her granddaughter, adult children, and cherished friends as often as all involved could manage.

It was with great regret and sad necessity that her family moved her away from Manzanita for close care for dementia in Medford and in Bellingham, where she and Callie passed after a period of years.

Joanne is survived by her sister, Elizabeth; her nieces, Thea and Athena; her daughter, Rebecca; her son, Matt; her granddaughter, Zoe; the God Parents of her children, John Haveles, and Ted and Anne Haveles; by other relatives from the New England community in which she was raised; and by a diverse host of good friends she made throughout her life and travels.

Although Joanne had long lived by herself, she was never truly alone and was always well-known and loved. She was equally at home in the company of friends and family, and in keeping her own company with Callie at her side. She settled in the place of her choosing and found joy and fulfillment there for years in the life she had built for herself.

Throughout occasionally turbulent years of adolescence and early adulthood,

Joanne would confidently advise her children: “You’ll miss me when I’m gone.” It seemed funny at the time, but it turns out she was right about that all along.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks those who are so inclined to make a contribution in Joanne’s name to the Alzheimer’s Association [<https://www.alz.org/>] or to their local animal rescue group or shelter in honor of her late companion, Callie, and in recognition of Joanne’s devotion to the other pets for whom she cared throughout her life.

Logistics and the temporary suspension of local programs during the pandemic have created unanticipated delays in arranging for the placement of a memorial bench in Joanne’s honor. When a dedication ceremony can be arranged, an announcement will be posted. At this time, the family anticipates a date sometime in the Spring of 2023.

Tribute Wall

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“*Joanne and I met in nursing school in Newport, R.I. We became good friends through out our training. I made many visits to Connecticut with her to visit her family. She was one of my brides maids when I got married. After graduation we lost track of each other. I have often thought about her and wondered how she was doing. I was blessed to know her. She had such a great laugh and we did that a lot.*

While thinking about her today and looking on the internet to find her, I sadly ran across her obituary. I was so happy to read about her life accomplishments.

Eileen Grant Deblanc - March 29, 2024 at 12:00 AM

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“*I'm so glad that Joanne was part of our lives in Manzanita. We miss her.*

Nancy Leslie - July 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM