



Ms. Barbara Owen Goerke

February 16, 1934 - July 21, 2020

Barbara Owen Goerke passed away on July 21, 2020 in Tallahassee, Florida, at the age of 86.

She was born on February 16, 1934, in Brownstown, Indiana, to parents William Owen and Mary Anna Yancey. Although she was born in Indiana, she called Royal Oak, Michigan home. Many happy summers were also spent visiting family in La Center, Kentucky.

Barbara is survived by her daughters, Lynn McWilliams (Todd), Jill Leach (Fred), and son, Kurt Goerke (Beth); grandchildren, Andrew and Kelsey McWilliams, Fredrick, Alex, and Terence Leach (Jordan), Mitchell and Nicholas Goerke; her first great-grandchild, Miles Leach; and brother, Terry Owen.

She worked many years for the Florida Department of Education, serving in numerous positions over the course of her career. Barbara received numerous performance awards throughout her tenure. In her retirement she volunteered for Ability 1st and Riley Elementary School where she was twice named the Leon County Senior Volunteer of the Year.

Barbara will be forever remembered for her passion of giving to others, keeping her commitments, and her unwavering integrity. She was a talented

cook and hostess with a quick wit and great sense of humor. She also enjoyed many hobbies including sewing, arts and crafts projects and floral arranging.

She was a patron of the arts and spent many happy evenings enjoying excellent performances at FSU School of Theatre, Theatre Tallahassee, as well as an occasional Broadway show.

Gigi, as she was known to her seven grandchildren, will be greatly missed by all but remembered as a grandmother who always had a cookie at the ready and a house decorated for the season including a Twelve Days of Christmas display that was well known and will be missed in her neighborhood. Her grandchildren were a great source of pride and happiness to her.

She was also fortunate to have just become a Great-Grandmother for the first time in June of this year as the family celebrated and welcomed Miles Leach. Thank you to Terry and Jordan for getting that done on time!

Barbara will be missed by many other groups and individuals including a luncheon group referred to as "The Divas" and her neighborhood "Friday Night Group".

Perhaps because she was transplanted from Michigan and had no immediate family in Tallahassee, she developed many relationships with families and friends that became as close as family and were considered family for all practical purposes. She cherished and was thankful for you all. (You know who you are)! Thank you all for sharing in her wonderful life. Her children send their grateful appreciation and love to you all. They will greatly miss her but are very thankful to have been able to call this wonderful woman mom.

Tribute Wall

JE

“ Dear Barbara's Family,

Since 2006, 10 months of every year, our Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of North Florida group has walked High Road from Tarpe to Old Bainbridge and back down Croydon picking up trash for Keep Leon County Beautiful Adopt-a-Road. We always noticed your mother's decorations for each season. Of course we especially loved the elaborate display she shared for "The Twelve Days of Christmas". Over the years she was outside a time or two when we passed, and she always spoke to us with such cheer. A few Decembers ago, she was outside, and we expressed to her the joy we felt when we passed her home. We shared how much we appreciated her whimsy and dedication. Earlier this month, I was stuck with sadness when I walked by her house and saw it was for sale. I did some research and realized Barbara had passed. My condolences to all of you. What a gift she must have been to her family and friends.

We wanted you to know her welcoming home was an uplift to this group of strangers, each month for so many years. May we all make such positive contributions in our lives.

Blessings to you Barbara.

Sincerely, JenniferB, <https://www.facebook.com/peacecorpstallahassee/>

JenniferSBH - March 30, 2021 at 03:07 PM

JS

“ Lynn, Jill, and Kurt, I doubt you remember me, but I worked with your mom in Mr. Golden's office for 8 years in the late 70's and early 80's. She was such a fun person and we spent many hours getting to know each other. In fact, she made some of her famous gingerbread men for my daughter, who was little at the time, and she has been a gingerbread lover ever since. Even though we didn't see each other much, we always picked back up like we had never been apart. I am truly shocked by her passing, and I just discovered it quite by accident while looking at another obit on this website. I am sorry for your loss and I am heartbroken that I didn't get a chance to see or talk to her one more time! I will never forget her or the impact she had on my life!

Jane Strickland

Jane Strickland - September 10, 2020 at 05:34 PM

MG

“ Sweet Barb, you will be missed. You brought such a bright light with you wherever you went. How blessed I am to have known you even though for only a few short years. You were the most clever "gift giver" and creative gift wrapper I've ever known. Those were your little secrets. Your love and gracious giving of your time, love and laughter were out there for all to see. I'm sorry for your family as they have lost their bright light. You loved them so much. Your grandchildren will always remember you as they are all old enough to have lived and shared so much of your life with you. Lucky for them. You are an angel now sharing heaven with so many of those we love. Thank you for sharing your life with me. I have been blessed.

Mary Gerardi
Tallahassee

Mary Behrens Gerardi - August 01, 2020 at 12:29 PM

LM

“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Lynn E McWilliams - July 30, 2020 at 08:13 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Beth Goerke - July 30, 2020 at 07:37 PM



“ *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel"*
~ Maya Angelou

I have learned this too!

Gigi always made me feel loved & welcome. She went above and beyond for all of us ~ especially for her grandchildren! She gave with her whole heart!

We were blessed to have this wonderful woman in our lives ~ as mom, grandmother "Gigi" , Mother-in-law & friend. We will miss her dearly but she will always be with us in our memories, traditions, future generations, our laughter & even our recipes!

Love you Gigi! xoxoxo, Beth G.

Beth Goerke - July 30, 2020 at 06:43 PM

MR

“ *Diva Barb was such a delight to be around. She was all that others have posted and more. I don't think anyone who had the pleasure of spending time with Barbara walked away feeling anything but happy and blessed. At our Diva luncheons she kept us entertained with funny stories about days gone by and about her current events. I told her I want to be just like her when I grow up; and at the age of 75 I don't think it'll ever happen. Diva Barb was very proud of her children, their spouses and her grandchildren. We loved seeing her albums of family get togethers. What a joy and special lady she was. She'll always be in my heart. My prayers are with her family.*

Mary (Diva Mimi) Roskovich - July 28, 2020 at 09:27 PM

TF

“ *Ms. Barbara was always the most gracious and fun lady to be around at Ability1st. She will forever be remembered fondly for her dedication, thoughtfulness, and fabulous home cooking! It was a joy to know her and she will be greatly missed by our staff. God Bless.*

Tina Ferfort

Tina Ferfort - July 28, 2020 at 09:33 AM

LY

“ *I'm reminiscing of our wonderful family times, our laughter & great memories over the years! You were always my favorite cousin! I admired you so very much! My Dad, James & our family always called you Bobbie, what we loved most about you was your spirit, your positivity, your caring, your love for your family & of course your cooking!!! We will
Always treasure those incredible meals with you!
You will forever be loved & missed so very much. Your light always shined brightly just like your personality!
Our deepest sympathy to Lynn & Todd, Jill & Fred, Kurt & Beth & their children.*

*Forever in our hearts,
Linda Yancey
Teri & Mark Redman*

linda Yancey - July 27, 2020 at 09:38 PM

JL

“ Like everyone who knew her, I loved going to Barb's house for one of her famous dinners, but I think my favorite place to see her was at Ability1st when she was volunteering. I no longer worked there, but I knew I could find her there on any given Tuesday afternoon, because that was her commitment and she always kept it. She would pause to visit, but the best part was just watching her doing her thing, helping anyone who came up to ask, and offering them homemade cookies in the bargain. The staff loved their Ms. Goerke and she clearly loved them. It was a privilege to share those moments filled with so much goodness.

Joan Leggitt - July 27, 2020 at 05:34 PM

PM

“ My deepest sympathies to Barbara's family. Barbara has been a beloved neighbor for over 30 years. I could always expect a beautiful smile and humorous story each time I walked my golden pups. An absolutely awesome soul. Her infectious smile and humor will be missed. Pattie Malarney

Pattie Malarney - July 27, 2020 at 04:45 PM

AF

“ My condolence to the family. Thinking of you in these difficult times. Barbara was truly one of the best friends I've ever know. Her kindness will be forever be remembered in my heart. May God be with you all.

*Forever missed
Annie Fedd
(850) 562-3860*

Annie Fedd - July 26, 2020 at 07:55 PM

SL

“ Barb has been a part of my life since I moved to Tallahassee in 1964. She and Millie Giordano screened my dates for years. Very few got a thumbs up. Finally one did and Barb catered my wedding in 1970 with her wonderful food. I had the pleasure of helping her with Lynn and Jill’s weddings. Lost count of the melon balls we cut and hundreds of roses from the Whites garden that we arranged. She was always a friend to count on. Last year she talked me into joining her gym (not the most fun thing she got me to do. I’ll bet she and Millie are up to something right now. Rest In Peace

Sandy Lyday - July 26, 2020 at 04:07 PM

LY

“ Barbara was probably the most loving and caring person I ever had the opportunity to know. She was a wonderful hostess and loving friend. She took in my two little boys when they were little after my mom passed away very early in their lives. Barbara became that grandmother to my boys. She had their birthday parties at her house, did sleep overs and went trick or treating with us. She will be missed and remembered for what she did for so many others. RIP

Lynn (Abbott)

Lynn - July 26, 2020 at 07:49 AM

CA

“ Adjusting to having Aunt Barb in my heart after being in my life will continue only through the love and memories she gifted me from childhood. ...there has never been a moment literally that I didn't know that I could call her and she would be there for me. Blessings come in many ways... in a moment spent together, a phone call just to say I'm checking on you, a plate of homemade cookies, chicken and dumplings, or a brown sugar poundcake...She always gave of herself to others and her amazing culinary skills were literally icing on the cake! Thank you for bringing so much happiness and opening yourself to us all. Mostly, thank you for loving us with an unconditional heart..

Cathy - July 25, 2020 at 06:38 PM

AT

“ From Michigan to Florida, we've enjoyed a lifetime of “ family” with the G's. Barb was selfless in sharing her time and talents...craft projects, wedding flower arrangements, cooking mentor-an inspiration and dear friend, in so many ways. She loved sharing the latest family news, including the birth of her first great grand child. We'll miss our Tallahassee visits with her and cherish our many memories.
Lynn, Jill, Kurt- your mama was a special lady and she raised three awesome kids.
Love,
Anne, Pat, Doug, & Jennie

Anne Templeton - July 25, 2020 at 01:58 PM

KG

“ Mom, I am going to miss you and everything about you but I am going to try to do what you've always done and make the best of troubles that come my way. I will try to focus on being thankful that you were my mom(I've always known how lucky I was there) and remembering all of the wonderful memories that I have of you and us as a family and all of the amazing friends and family that gathered around you. Thank you for your love. I love you!

Kurt Goerke - July 25, 2020 at 12:43 PM

KG

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Kurt Goerke - July 25, 2020 at 12:19 PM

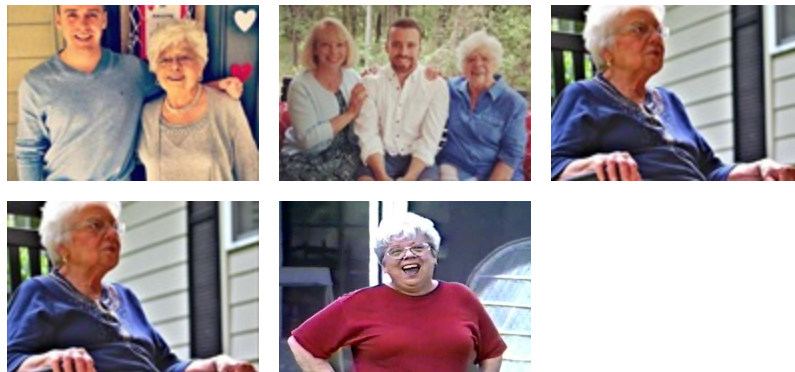
SL

“ Barb was like a second mother to me when I moved to Tallahassee in 1964. She catered my wedding in 1970. I have stayed close to Barb and her children throughout the years. Helped with both daughters weddings (cutting melon balls and arranging dozens of roses from her friends the Whites). Last year she talked me into going to the gym! She was a special lady and a good friend. Barbara Goerke will be truly missed by many❤️

Sandy Lyday - July 25, 2020 at 10:29 AM

AM

“ 12 files added to the album Memories Album



Andrew McWilliams - July 25, 2020 at 12:11 AM

LH

“ *Mrs. Goerke was the epitome of a Mother and Grandmother. She was one of the most loving, kind people I have ever known. And cook! that woman could cook and bake like no one else. I will forever miss just knowing she was in her house in Tallahassee and if you wanted to come by, she'd feed you. Barb, you were so loved by so many. I know your children, grandchildren and even that new great- grandchild will carry on your legacy of kindness and love.*

Lisa Holland - July 24, 2020 at 08:49 PM

LM

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Lynn McWilliams - July 24, 2020 at 08:21 PM

LM

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Lynn McWilliams - July 24, 2020 at 08:17 PM



“ 30 files added to the album *Memories Album*



Abbey Funeral Home and Tallahassee Memory Gardens - July 24, 2020 at 07:59 PM