



Nancy E Quinn

August 31, 2016

Quinn, Nancy died peacefully at the age of 85 in the emergency room of St. Anthony's Hospital, with her two loyal caregivers of over 30 years, Donna Campbell and Ruth Benner by her side. A graduate of Newton High School and LaSalle College, she was just married and on her honeymoon when she was struck by polio at the age of 22. Nancy spent a year in an iron lung, completely paralyzed. During this period of pain and despair she was taught to breathe in a rocking bed and eventually to breathe on her own with a respirator at night.

Two years later Nancy was accepted at the Polio Foundation Rehabilitation Center in Warm Springs, Georgia, established by the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This was a turning point in her life. She and her husband, George Quinn, moved to neighboring La Grange, Georgia, where she spent the next few years in a grueling eight hour daily training program in the pool and on machines, as her therapists tried to find a working muscle in her paralyzed body. She was eventually fitted to a special wheelchair with mechanical devices to take fullest advantage of a slight movement in her right hand. She learned to hold a fork, comb her hair, brush her teeth and eventually to use a typewriter and a pen to write again.

Nancy had always been artistic and soon took up a paintbrush with the aid of ball bearings at her elbow; friends donated funds for her to take the Famous

Artists Course, and as she progressed, she submitted paintings to the Sister Kenny Annual Art Competition, frequently winning ♦First Prize♦. And despite her impossible circumstances, Nancy became a prolific and accomplished painter. She began exhibiting and selling her work, and started a small business selling greeting cards of her paintings. She returned to her parent♦s home in Auburndale, Massachusetts as a divorcee, and worked to support herself with her painting. When her father died, she and her mother moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, but within weeks of the move her mother died, leaving Nancy completely on her own.

The story of Nancy♦s life is one of great courage, indomitable spirit, determination, patience, and pride. On her own, with the help of friends and dedicated care-givers, she has managed to survive more than sixty years of polio paralysis - a nightmare of pain, despair, loneliness, and grief. In spite of everything, she lived a life of dignity and grace, and said that her unsung heroes were the loyal caregivers who devoted so many years looking after her in difficult and demanding situations. Nancy was ready to say goodbye and thanks you all. A bright star has joined the galaxy in the sky.

The service will be held at Nancy's house at 1951 42nd Way North St.
Petersburg, FL Saturday September 10, 2016 at 11AM

Tribute Wall



“ *The family of Nancy E Quinn uploaded a photo*

August 19, 2019 at 12:00 AM



“ *Joe Zihala - Old Friend posted a condolence I'm sorry to have lost touch with Nancy for all these years. She was such a sweet lady. I met Nancy in the 80's through my old girlfriend, Michelle, who was one of Nancy's caretakers. I visited Michelle often at Nancy's house. I remember once taking Nancy on an outing in her van to John's Pass and having a takeout seafood dinner. I remember she enjoyed our trip. I have fond memories of those days knowing Nancy and I remember Donna and Ruth. Nancy had remembered me well enough to invite me to her 80th birthday party. That was such a special moment to see her again. I pray that God has restored her body and that she is now enjoying the fullness of his joy. I so hope to see Nancy again one day. All my love to you Nancy...Joe*

Joe Zihala - Old Friend - February 06, 2019 at 12:00 AM



“ *Vanessa Smith - Daughter of a Friend posted a condolence I was so sorry to read of Mrs. Quinn's passing. She was a friend of my father's and I have always kept her story close in my heart as a source of inspiration. I have a painting of hers -- done maybe sometime in the 70s -- hanging in my bedroom. I know my father still has at least two of her paintings in his apartment as well. We send our deepest condolences and many well wishes for the family.*

Vanessa Smith - Daughter of a Friend - March 23, 2017 at 12:00 AM

MF

“*Martha Hatch Bancroft - Friend posted a condolence Nancy and I were brought together because Bob Golledge, the rector of our church, Parish of the Messiah, knew that we could help each other. I was a young widow with two children. My husband had struggled with depression for three years and ended it by taking his own life. Nancy was 8 years older than me, confined to a life of serious limits because she was paralyzed by polio. Reverend Golledge knew that I needed to heal and Nancy needed to help--the perfect distraction for each of us. So I became Nancy's wheels. I was her get-out-of-jail card and we would go wherever we wanted. As I think back I wonder how we ever succeeded, what with always needing an extra person at each end the trip to help lift her in or out of my car. And it's hard to believe but back then there were no handicap parking spaces or curb cuts for wheelchairs. We made it work because we both wanted our get-a-ways to succeed and continue. Probably the most memorable of our outings happened when we decided to go to a nearby mall one day. The trouble is it was beginning to snow. We were determined, in spite of the weather, to go to our special destination, Howard Johnson's ice cream parlor. So here we are crossing one of the most congested streets in Newton. The wind picked up driving the snow into our faces. We must have made a crazy sight: I'm pushing this wheelchair, its whets digging into slush, Nancy's sitting tall as their chair rocks back and forth, the snow is coming straight at us making it hard to see, and we make it across before the light changes, all for an ice cream treat. She told me later that she loved it because it was reckless. I like to think that I brought some fun, a change of scenery, certainly the opportunity for Nancy to get away from her bed for a few hours. What she did for me was to let me be in her life. It taught me so much about courage. She had her mother with her, but I watched as Nancy realized that she was eventually going to have to take charge of her own care. It was scary and frustrating and lonely. But she never wavered and she never complained. Whenever I felt sorry for myself I would think of Nancy and my problems became nothing compared to hers. She was then, and still is now, my hero.*

Martha Hatch Bancroft - Friend - October 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

EM

“ *Edwin S Murray Jr. - class mate posted a condolence So sorry to read of Nancy's passing. Thankful for her truly inspirational life. Class mate from Burr School through Newton High class of "49". Edwin Murray, Dennis MA*

Edwin S Murray Jr. - class mate - September 08, 2016 at 12:00 AM

PA

“ *Pamela Riordan - Certainly an admirer posted a condolence I happened to be looking at the Boston Globe obituaries and Nancy's picture caught my attention... my first impression was "what beautiful eyes ... eyes of love, of joy, of peace". With then reading about Nancy's life, I wondered if she truly could have such a beautiful, peaceful countenance what with the devastating challenges she endured and surmounted. Thank you for sharing her life's story ... as others have shared, I don't know Nancy but I've come to know her through her obituary. What an example of endurance, long-suffering and so many additional attributes. I am inspired to truly live the life I have been given by the Good Lord, knowing that others not blessed with all of the faculties I have, have lived lives of great meaning and purpose. The world is all the less due to Nancy's passing. What a blessing that she passed peacefully with her two loyal caregivers, Donna and Ruth by her side. May Nancy rest in eternal peace and may Donna and Ruth savor the memories of time spent well with her.*

Pamela Riordan - Certainly an admirer - September 08, 2016 at 12:00 AM

YS

“ yolanda lopez - none, just moved by jer amazing story posted a condolence Never met you Nancy, but was so moved by your plight, and courage, just had a to leave a message. I lost my child in 2011. and cry every day for her. I wish she had lived 85 years, but sadly she only had 38. I honestly don't know why I am sharing this, just felt I had to write. I wish I had met you, and hope that in your travels, you and my Lesley, somehow meet. Rest in peace...

yolanda lopez - none, just moved by jer amazing story - September 04, 2016 at 12:00 AM

AC

“ Alice - A Christian posted a condolence I didn't know Nancy, read her obituary in the paper this morning. I was touched by her courage & spirit. She was blessed to have such dedicated caregivers. I know she has entered heaven & is with Our Heavenly Father. May Jesus hold Nancy in His arms.

Alice - A Christian - September 04, 2016 at 12:00 AM