



Barbara Ann Thomas

May 8, 1946 - December 25, 2023

Barbara Ann Thomas

1946 - 2023

Barbara Ann Thomas, 77, of Napa, formerly of Aloha, Oregon, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family on Christmas Day following a lengthy illness.

Born May 8, 1946, in Vallejo, California, Barbara was the adopted daughter of the late John Ernest and Rose Linda Brehmer Merrill. As John served in the United States Navy for over 20 years, the family relocated to live near his duty stations, which included various California locations, as well as New York and Japan. In 1956 the family settled into their home on Thelma Avenue in Vallejo, where Barbara and her brothers, Cliff and Jack, were raised. As a girl Barbara was introduced to the wonderful world of Disney characters and fell in love with Dumbo, only later to decide on Goofy as her lifelong favorite.

Barbara attended Steffan Manor Elementary School, Hogan Junior High, Vallejo Senior High, then graduated from Hogan Senior High in 1964. Barbara was involved in school activities, and she was very talented at singing and dancing. Through the years, Barbara remained very connected with her Vallejo and Hogan High classmates.

Sadly, Rose and John passed away in 1972. Barbara was 26, Cliff 23 and Jack only 16 when they lost their beloved parents. In 2012, Barbara said farewell to Frank, the love of her life, when he passed away.

Barbara spent more than thirty years in the hospitality industry—many years as a server in restaurants and occasional stints as bartender. She also spent five years as secretary for The Banyan Tree, a child and adolescent residential care provider. In 1965 she married a former neighbor and high school classmate, Eddie Kemp, with whom they share a daughter, Rhonda. In 1980, she met Franklin “Frank” Ray Thomas while serving as a bartender. The couple married in 1982 and Frank insisted Barbara leave work to become a homemaker. They made their home in Aloha, Oregon for more than thirty years and together enjoyed searching garage sales and frequent trips to Lincoln City for Bingo.

The two enjoyed entertaining good friends and neighbors and even welcomed a neighbor dog “Buster” who would escape to the Thomas home while his owners were away and spend the day with them. Eventually he was adopted by Frank and Barbara and became one of the many fur babies the two were privileged to care for, including Dutch, Osa, Boozer—and soon Barbara’s fur son Chubbers. There was also Corkie, a chihuahua named “Little Man”, and Butch the parakeet.

Barbara will be remembered as a warm hearted, loving lady who adopted most everyone she met as family—each with a stocking hung in her home at Christmas! She had an infallible memory and was her families’ reference for names, dates, and historical happenings.

Barbara so loved her adopted parents and brothers, but she yearned to know more about her birth family. After years of research, she discovered that her birth mother, Elizabeth, passed away, but she was able to find and contact a

number of her birth siblings. She developed a close relationship with them, and even went to several of their family reunions.

Barbara is survived by her daughter Rhonda Kemp, her husband Len Bickford, and their children: Rhonda's children, Mariah Martinez and her daughter Briar Rose, Carter Martinez and his partner Nickoli Marcus, and Len's children, Chelsee Bunch, her husband Nathan, and Trevor Bickford and his girlfriend Krystle; Frank's sons Frank Thomas Jr, Robert, and Jason and son Wyatt Thomas and Fiance Jessica. Also surviving are two brothers, Clifford Merrill, his wife Barbara, and their children: Jessica Merrill, her husband Nik, and their newborn son Luca, and Chris Merrill and fiancé Stephanie; and Jack Merrill, his wife Sherri, and their children Kelsie Thompkins, her husband Andrew, and daughters Willow and Violet; and Johnathan Walsh, his wife Leilani, and their daughters Porter and Parker. Barbara's birth family includes her five sisters: Lydia, Joan, Beth, Cathy, and twins, sister Mignonette, and brother Richard.

A celebration of Barbara's Life will be held 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at Treadway & Wigger Funeral Chapel, 2383 Napa-Vallejo Highway, in Napa. Private committal will be on a later date, joining her late husband Frank in the Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, Oregon.

The family asks memorials be made to the ASPCA, any organization of aid to animals or to the charity of the donor's choice. Friends may relay condolences online at treadwaywigger.com

Previous Events



Celebration

JAN 9. 6:00 PM (PT)

Treadway & Wigger Funeral Chapel
2383 Napa-Vallejo Highway
Napa, CA 94558

Tribute Wall

RK

“ I will never forget this day, you waited for us to get married for many years, you helped plan this day with me for 3+ years! I love and miss you so much Mom I'm so grateful for the last 7+ years together in our Home and Lives, you will live in my heart forever  Hugs 
Rhonda



Rhonda E Kemp - January 20, 2024 at 02:15 AM

CM

“ Barbara, I will miss you so much, big sister. Back in the day, we were such pals. I have wonderful memories of mom, dad, brother Jack and me living at our family home on Thelma Avenue in Vallejo. Now, I imagine you with our folks and your beloved Frank, laughing and drinking coffee. Rest in Peace, big sister. Your brother, Cliff



Cliff Merrill - January 06, 2024 at 07:51 PM

CM

“ Barbara, my beloved big sister, I will miss you so much. Growing up, we were best pals. I have wonderful memories of mom, dad, you, brother Jack and me living in our Thelma Avenue home in Vallejo. Now you will be with our folks and your Frank, visiting and laughing while drinking a cup of your favorite coffee. Rest in Peace sweet sister. Your brother, Cliff



Cliff Merrill - January 06, 2024 at 07:09 PM

CM

“ Clifford M. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Barbara Ann Thomas.

Clifford M. - January 06, 2024 at 06:50 PM



“ Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Barbara Ann Thomas.



January 04, 2024 at 07:36 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Barbara Ann Thomas.



January 03, 2024 at 11:28 AM



“ The Walsh Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Barbara Ann Thomas.

The Walsh Family - January 03, 2024 at 11:28 AM



“ Linda Paul Newton lit a candle in memory of Barbara Thomas



Linda and Paul Newton - January 02, 2024 at 10:46 PM



“ Bobbi at Hogan/Vallejo Class Picnic 10-12-23



Linda and Paul Newton - January 02, 2024 at 10:45 PM

LN

“ *Bobbi's Senior Class Photo
Hogan High School 1964*



Linda and Paul Newton - January 02, 2024 at 10:12 PM

LN

“ *2 files added to the tribute wall*



Linda and Paul Newton - January 02, 2024 at 10:08 PM

LN

“ *Linda Paul Newton lit a candle in memory of
Barbara Thomas*



Linda and Paul Newton - January 02, 2024 at 10:05 PM

MH

“ We are sorry to hear the news of Barb's passing. She was the best neighbor ever! She loved our kids and all our animals, even a super noisy, annoying rooster! (One neighbor complained, but she said she loved waking every morning to his crowing.) She was such a blessing to our family and we will miss her dearly. May your family find comfort during this time of mourning. Mary & Peter Heck & Family.

Mary Heck - January 01, 2024 at 11:29 PM

RK

Hi Mary thank you so much for your kind words, Mom loved you all as her neighbors just know that your memories are with her and she had a fake rooster in memory of your early morning riser!!

Rhonda E Kemp - January 20, 2024 at 01:39 AM



“ I am so sorry for your loss! I will always remember the good old days in the 80s when my mom, Bobbi, Frank, and us kids would get together for nothing but good times. This is a picture of my mother (Angel), Bobbi, and Frank, when we went out for a visit in 1994. I have others but this was the first one I could find. Love you all and miss you all!!!



Adrian Appelman - January 01, 2024 at 11:21 PM

RK

We had some amazing memories Adrian didn't we, hugs and much love Rhonda & Family ☐ that quilted blanket in the background is still surviving these days, believe it or not!!

Rhonda E Kemp - January 20, 2024 at 01:41 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Treadway & Wigger Funeral Chapel & Crematory - January 01, 2024 at 08:48 PM