

Mary Nell had a brave and adventurous heart. As a school child experiencing a flush toilet for the first time, a fellow classmate informed her that if you sat on the commode while flushing, you would die. Well, she took her life in her hands and tested that assertion. Fortunately, she survived to take that same spirit of bravery and adventure to the rest of her life. She traveled widely with friends and family, particularly enjoying trips to the Holy Land, Europe and then Disney World for the first time at the age of 75. Mary Nell traveled to all fifty US states, her children organizing trips for her to the hard ones – Judy and Michael took her to Vermont, David and Rhonda to Hawaii and Philip and Judy Eileen to North Dakota, a state she visited at the age of 85 during the middle of a global pandemic. Her last excursions were closer to home, and at 87 years old and while confined to a wheelchair, she cheered on the fighting Texas Aggie football team, had her picture taken with the yell leaders, watched the Aggie band march and dined on beer and nachos with her granddaughter and returned to her assisted living facility at 2 o'clock in the morning. Her sense of adventure had limits though. She drew the line at some of the exploits of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but they enjoyed teasing her with videos, and she enjoyed calling them idiots.

Mary Nell was a gifted seamstress, learning to sew beautifully at her mother's knee. They made her wedding dress together, and Mary Nell went on to craft her daughter's wedding dress and an unreasonable number of bridesmaids dresses for her granddaughter. Her quilts are beautifully crafted and will be treasured by her family, though many of her offspring remain disgruntled about the amount of time they spent by her side in fabric stores. Mary Nell's sewing skills were equally matched by her prowess with desserts. She was recruited as Head Dessert Chef by her young great-grandson for her prowess with banana pudding, coconut pound cake and marshmallow cream puffs.

Mary Nell was a joy to be around, and her wide smile and quick laugh will be missed. She was a good friend and a woman of strong faith. She loved her family and had the deepest admiration for her mother. She knew all the best nursery rhymes, bought first copies of Little Women, Winnie the Pooh and Black Beauty – all carefully protected with laminated library covers - for her children and grandchildren. Well into her 80s, she was up for family board games and was wily enough to defeat her adult grandchildren in a game of Shadows over Camelot that will haunt them for the rest of their days.

Mary Nell was a sensitive woman and felt keenly. She was not necessarily the person you wanted with you right after an injury. Her sense of alarm over the situation wasn't comforting and she would correct your grammar in even the most trying circumstances – “blood is the noun and bleed is the verb.” But she was the one you wanted with you for the longer, harder work of recovering and mourning. She had a tender heart and ministered to those around her with compassion. And she forgave readily - freely and without being asked. She loved well. She walked through the world with an open heart and a gracious spirit. That's no small thing in a world where she took a lot of slings and arrows, losing her father in childhood and a beloved son later in life. It represented great fortitude and intention. If you are related to her by blood, marriage, friendship or adoption, she prayed for you and genuinely grieved for you when you struggled. She gloried over your triumphs. She saw you as the best version of yourself. And she told the rest of us about it. She uplifted us in one another's eyes. Now these three remain – faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love. Mary Nell Dicus led with love, and we are so thankful for it.

A funeral service will be held at First Baptist Church, Decatur, Texas on December 2 at 11:00AM. Visitation is on December 1 from 5:00-7:00PM at Hawkins Funeral Home in Decatur, Texas. Hawkins Funeral Home Decatur 940-627-5959 [www.hawkinsfuneralhome.com](http://www.hawkinsfuneralhome.com)