

Obituary

Barbara Roosevelt passed away far too soon on June 21, 2019 in Hernando, FL. She was 73 years young. Barbara died peacefully after a 22 year battle with Scleroderma. Barbara was born in 1945 in New York City to Maria del Carmen Apud and Al Thibault, a WWII Army Veteran from Connecticut. After her mother's untimely passing when Barbara was age 2, she was raised in Miami Beach by her aunts, Sally and Marguerite (Peggy). While attending St Patrick's School, Barbara met her lifelong friend, Gerry Aitken in the 3rd grade, and later, husband Jim. Barb and Gerry remained friends for the duration and disproved the maxim that you can't choose your family, while she and Jim showed the world what you can accomplish with a true partner and friend by your side.

After graduating high school, Barbara attended Barry University, and married Jim in January 1965. They moved to Omaha, NE while Jim served in the Air Force, welcoming daughter Melinda on Barbara's own birthday in 1967. Nebraska winters were hard on the Floridian, but she persevered without complaint, walking to work at the local bank through knee deep snow (in a skirt!) so Jim could drive to the base each day. The young family moved back to Miami in 1969 and flourished. They were joined by daughter Melissa in 1971 and son Michael in 1977, spending many years in South Florida, before enjoying a much-deserved retirement in beautiful Citrus County. Their retirement was marked by numerous adventures together, and several in the company of dear friends. Never afraid of the unknown, they discovered a love of cruising, and found themselves in Alaska, Italy, France, the Baltic's, the Caribbean, and more. Barbara spent many years working two careers, as she and Jim worked full time raising their family. When the children were older, Barb worked at Broward College for the Financial Aid office, a job which brought her joy and afforded her the opportunity to administer a privately funded scholarship foundation, where she worked to help deserving students attain their dreams of attending college. She continued to manage the foundation for 15 years after her retirement until her death and was responsible in no small part for the education of thousands. But her true delight was her family. No matter the struggle, no matter the commitment, Barbara devoted her life to raising her children in partnership and teamwork with Jim. For years, she drove "Mom's Limo" to sports games, cheerleading practice, dance classes, brownie troop meetings, and more. Yearly trips saw the family exploring the Grand Canyon, Glacier National Park, Disney World, the Great Smokey Mountains, and so much more. These road trips began in the family van, and grew to a pop-up trailer, a motor home, and finally to the coach of their dreams. As the children grew, and the girls left home for college and lives of their own, Barbara never stopped being Mom; never stopped sharing adventures and a zeal for life. She and Michael took a solo trip to our nation's capital, a grand adventure just for the two of them. Trips to visit colleges and PhD graduations, the joys of welcoming four grandchildren and watching her daughters raise families of their own, the thrill of seeing her son legally married – these were just some of the well deserved fruits of her labors.



Barbara ensured her children understood the importance of curiosity, and joy, and love. She taught them to be kind, and to value hard work and its rewards. She made every day fun and every day special, and she made them feel like the most important and the most special person in the world every single day. She taught them to welcome life's pains along with its blessings, and to never, ever take each other for granted. They are her legacy.

Barbara is survived by her husband Jim, her children Melinda Mills (Peter), Melissa Pflum (Wayne), and Michael (Blake Crawford), and 4 grandchildren, Eileen, Jake, Meghan, and Max, as well as a host of friends, especially her Mahjong Ladies.

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