

Brenda Joyce Chapin, 68, died suddenly on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at Seven Rivers Hospital in Crystal River, Florida. Her husband and one of her very best friends were by her side.

Brenda was born on February 17, 1955, in Plant City, Florida, to Reverend Wayne Sr. and Joyce Hancock. It might surprise some of her friends to learn she was a preacher's daughter, but it's true. Her family moved all around Florida throughout her childhood, bouncing from church to church to wherever her dad was preaching.

She met the love of her life, Stephen Chapin, at the First Pentecostal Holiness Church of Ocala when they were just 13 years old. Luckily, he was friends with her three brothers, so he had an excuse to hang around the house. They married in 1975, and though they eventually left the church behind, they took its finest principles of love, compassion, and charity with them.



They planted their roots in Crystal River in 1981, and it was here that they raised their babies, built their careers, and made lifelong friends. They blazed a trail together for almost 49 years, and, frankly, we are all pretty pissed that the “til death do us part” part snuck up so quickly.

Brenda became a Registered Nurse in 1975, and devoted her life to caring for others. We aren't going to list all of her professional accomplishments, but she had a bunch, and jumped at the chance to learn something new, do something better. She loved being a nurse, and for 42 years was on call 24/7 for anyone with a medical question, a sick baby, or a suspicious mole. Being a healer was her identity, as was being the designated medical authority in our house. Just ask her son, a doctor.

She was quick to fight any hint of injustice; heaven help anyone caught picking on the underdog. If she loved you, she was your biggest advocate (regardless of your feelings on the matter). Her opinions were nothing if not strong, just like her language. She was the freaking best.

She did not believe in boundaries. She loved a crowded house, a road trip, and experimented liberally in the kitchen. The results were typically amazing.

The phrase “shop till you drop” may have been written expressly for her. She couldn't pass up a sale, which was fortunate because her love language was gifts. Lest a special occasion sneak up on her, her “gift-closet” inventory was robust, and she could almost certainly materialize the perfect thing at a moment's notice. Complete with a fancy ribbon.

Spoiling the children in her orbit was serious business. She loved them fiercely (regardless of whether she gave birth to them) and was known as “Bena” to so many. We warned friends that she was ready to steal their kids at a moment's notice, scooping them up for an impromptu adventure to anywhere. They would DEFINITELY come home with souvenirs.

And we know it's annoying to gush, but she truly was generous to a fault. If you complimented her earrings, she was likely to just take them off and give them to you on the spot. The running joke: God forbid you compliment her shirt. She often paid for struggling patients' medications out of her own pocket. Organized community service projects for those in need lucky enough to cross her path. It was just her nature to help.

She scoured thrift stores for sparkly things, and was at any moment equipped to conjure decorations for a backyard wedding, a last-minute baby shower, or to whip up a fairy hunt through the woods to a pot of treasure. She liked a dash of whimsy and magic, and was certain she would have made a great mermaid.

Brenda never met a plant she couldn't nurture, a creative project she couldn't tackle. She adored glitter. She made things beautiful using whatever she had on hand (which was generally a well-stocked craft room, so in fairness, she was prepared). The number of ongoing projects she left behind is honestly a bit intimidating.

Her heart was so big that it shouldn't be shocking it's what took her out, but it is. Right now, we're all gathered around her kitchen laughing, crying, and telling stories about her, which is especially painful because she would LOVE to be here joining in.

If she *were* here, she would tell you to take the trip, spend the money, buy the person you love the thing they covet if it brings them joy.

She was a beloved wife, mother, sister, aunt, daughter, and friend. We are all so devastated to lose her.

She is survived by her husband, Stephen Chapin, children Tracy Danaher (Kevin Danaher), Kevin Chapin, and Jennifer McDaigle (Nicole McDaigle), and grandchildren Emily, Sean, and Waverly. In lieu of flowers, she would have loved for you donate to The TBDC Foundation in honor of her pre-deceased granddaughter, Quillen McDaigle <https://tbcdfoundation.org/>.

Plans to celebrate her life are in the works. If you'd like to attend, please email brendachapinparty@gmail.com and we'll be sure to send you the details. See you there.