



Nancy Margaret Rose

June 5, 1946 - June 8, 2023

Nancy Margaret Rose was born on December 5, 1946 and died at home on June 8, 2023 surrounded by her wife, Ellen, her sister-in-law, Mary Ryan, and two dear friends.

Nancy leaves her wife, Ellen Perkins of Kingston, RI and was preceded in death by her mother, Lucille Rose Pittelkow, her father, James Rose, her brother, Donald Rose and her step-father, Edward Pittelkow.

Nancy's Devotion to the Arts

Nancy grew up in California where she first discovered her love of music through singing in the local Lutheran choir. From then on, the arts were one of her many passions. She enjoyed acting her entire life often convincingly introducing herself as an entirely different person. Once on a flight, she told her seat mate that she was a forensic anthropologist. Her acting was so convincing that he invited her to do a presentation at his children's summer camp on the Cape. Then, of course, she had to fess up. Whether Nancy had to "come clean" or left her new friends believing every word; she always had fun and she always had plenty to say.

Nancy's unwavering support of the arts found expression in her generous support of the Rhode Island Philharmonic, Trinity Repertory Theater, the Contemporary Theater, the Kingston Chamber Music Society and many, many, others.

Nancy's Devotion to Montessori

Nancy's commitment to Montessori Education was likewise a passion that consumed her entire life. She began her love affair with the Montessori approach to early childhood education in college in Palo Alto, CA and then, as a fully trained teacher, she moved to Colorado where she touched the lives of many children and families. Nancy opened her own Montessori schools in Bolder and then in Providence, RI. She kept building on her expertise in Montessori and became the Executive Director of the New England Early Childhood Associates and served on the board of the American Montessori Society. News of Nancy's expertise spread nationally and internationally. She was sought out as trainer of Montessori teachers and consultant to schools in New York, Massachusetts, Texas, Rhode Island and others. A few years ago, she was asked to offer teacher training in Vietnam. Despite the challenges of travel due to her increasing blindness from macular degeneration, Nancy answered the call. Nancy was such a terrific teacher of teachers, she was immediately invited to return. Always a pioneer, years ago Nancy began consulting with schools about how to recognize young trans students and offer them and their families gender affirming education. In recognition of Nancy's outstanding contribution, in March 2022, the American Montessori Association conferred its most prestigious award on Nancy — the Maria Montessori Trail Blazer.

Nancy's Devotion to Protecting Human Rights

Nancy's contributions did not stop with individual young children and their families. She also fought to build a society in which all would thrive.

In 1987, Nancy Rose joined her dear friend Jonathan Lubin as a member of the Rhode Island Alliance for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights. A small number of dedicated people had founded the Alliance in 1983 to work for passage of Rhode Island laws that would protect lesbians and gay men from

discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation, and credit. As Jonathan says “with Nancy on board, everything changed.”

Nancy’s participation in Alliance meetings energized the Alliance as never before. She was outspoken, impatient, and full of new ideas. She was a spark-plug, igniting members with new ways of thinking and new strategies. With her enthusiasm, Nancy was a natural for the presidency of the Alliance, and she helped to guide the organization, both during her tenure in that office and after.

That’s what the public saw. But behind the scenes and within the organization, Nancy was always present to tamp down disagreements over policy and strategy, and keep everyone’s eye on the goal — getting important legislation to the governor for signature.

Nancy and her colleagues worked tirelessly for eleven years, doing the hard but boring work of stuffing and stamping envelopes, collaring legislators in the halls of the State House, and attending and testifying in legislative committee hearings. In that eleventh year, Governor Lincoln Chaffee signed the Marriage Equality bill into law. Overjoyed, the Alliance gathered all its past presidents for a group photo, with Nancy right in the middle.

While Nancy worked tirelessly to protect her gay, lesbian and trans brothers and sisters, she also spoke out, wrote letters and fought to protect the rights of all of us. Among the many ways in which she worked for all human rights, Nancy fervently supported the work of the ACLU and served on the Board of its Rhode Island affiliate.

Nancy’s Spirit

In her late teens Nancy began questioning her spiritual and religious beliefs. She found her first Unitarian Universalist congregation during college in Palo Alto. There, she was affirmed in her belief that you could be a good and moral person without ascribing to theism. She found the Unitarian Universalist church a comforting place to be able to gather in community with people who

were passionate about trying to live a good and ethical life. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County in Peace Dale, RI was Nancy's spiritual home for the past 15 years. With the help and guidance of her friends, Jonathan and Mark King, Nancy created and single-handedly ran the Congregation's most important fund raiser, "Dining for Dollars." Nancy offered her wisdom and vision to UUCSC by serving on its Board of Directors, and later as President of the Congregation. During this past year, Nancy was a member of the very important Committee on Ministry and attended her last meeting of that committee only 8 days before her passing.

Nancy was dealt a difficult hand with serious physical challenges including macular degeneration. But, she did not complain. Instead, she adapted, always continuing to be a fighter and a doer.

An avid reader belonging to not 1 but 3 book clubs, Nancy transitioned to audio books to continue the pursuit of her life-long passion for reading. To combat physical challenges, Nancy faithfully worked out 6 days a week at the local YMCA.

But, all these accomplishments pale in comparison with Nancy's love for her wife, Ellen. Nancy and Ellen met in 1998 and quickly discovered their love for one another, their shared devotion to family and friends and their commitment to making a better world for all. They were married on November 11, 2011 in Cohasset, MA.

Nancy's lasting legacy to her family and friends is that one knew that once she shared her friendship, it was forever, through thick and thin.

Fred Small, one of Nancy's favorite lyricists, so perfectly captured her Spirit with the words "the only measure of your words and your deeds will be the love you leave when you're done".

She leaves us with immeasurable love that will remain in our hearts, always.

A Memorial Service will be held on June 27, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County, 27 North Road, Peace Dale, RI 02879. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Unitarian

Universalist Congregation of South County, or Heifer International, 1 World Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72202, or a charity dear to your heart.

Please visit Unitarian, Universalist Church of South County website for the zoom link of service.

Tribute Wall

CB

“ Dearest Nancy- I was sitting here tonight getting ready for a big job interview and I thought of you- my first boss- my mentor in early childhood education, Montessori training, and such a wonderful role model for a young woman coming out in college. I think of you often even though we lost touch when I moved to California. And today, I remember you- the strongest woman I knew, ran her own business, had a wicked sense of humor, taught me to always clean my sinkerator with fresh lemons. I had so little guidance from my parents and you gave me practical advice, relationship advice, health advice. Your story of overcoming cancer remains one of the most courageous stories I have ever heard. I still repeat it to those who are battling that illness. I am mourning your loss now, after all these years- remembering riding my bike everyday to the house on Morris Avenue where we taught side by side (3-5 year olds are still my favorite ages). Brice and Ashley-Lynn Titone and all the other kids. The pink cube! Such a formative experience for me. I am eternally grateful for your generosity, understanding, warmth and humor. You changed my life. Thank you... Love, Love, Love, Clove Galilee Breuer

Clove Galilee Breuer - April 09, 2024 at 01:41 AM

LZ

“ Nancy had a huge impact on me personally and professionally. While I haven't been in touch with her in years, I carry her within my heart. She had a generous and passionate spirit and was an amazing role model for me. She was an inspiration to so many. I have a wonderful memory of her at the State House, in the 10th year to advocate for LGBTQ rights. She knew I was coming to testify, as an advocate for justice, equity and human rights, as a leader in the early childhood community and as a mom. I was so thankful that she had signed me in when she arrived as the room was packed with people waiting to testify. I had my two young children with me. If she hadn't signed me in when she did, we would have added another two plus hour wait to testify. (My son fell asleep on my raincoat while we waited.) That was the year the Bills finally passed to protect LGBTQ rights in housing and the workplace. May all your memories of her bring you comfort, Ellen.
Laura Mason Zeisler

Laura Mason Zeisler - June 29, 2023 at 01:17 PM

MJ

“ Nancy was a wonderful, kind person and a beautiful friend to our family. She will be missed. Please accept our deepest condolences.

Matt Jackson - June 27, 2023 at 07:13 AM

VW

“ Ellen, you are in our thoughts. May your best memories bring you comfort. Ours are dear to us, as our neighbor on Morris Ave., serving on the RIACLU Affiliate Board and the many hours testifying at the State House. She will be missed and fondly remembered.
Vivian and Dan Weisman

Vivian Golan Weisman - June 24, 2023 at 11:44 AM

JM

“ Nancy was always one of my favorite patrons at Kingston Free Library. Rest in Peace

Judy Munson - June 24, 2023 at 09:32 AM

LC

“ I met Nancy only a couple of times, but she was memorable to me: she had a lovely way about herself, a certain ease and light radiated from her that lent me the idea that I'd known her for ages. She and Ellen made a wonderful couple and I grieve for Ellen's loss. God Bless Ellen and those that will miss her...Lee Waterbury Chappell

Lee Waterbury Chappell - June 21, 2023 at 08:33 AM

MO

“ Nancy was always so kind to me and had such a welcoming aura, I will remember her in this light...



Monette - June 17, 2023 at 03:35 PM

AL

I will remember you at sunsets. In Mexico, at the UU, at home with our relationships. Your energy and your passion for justice these are the legacies you leave for us. Thank you for your level-headed kindness. I have always admired your follow-through.

albert - June 17, 2023 at 05:46 PM

CK

Nancy was one of my hero's from RI. Her memory and activism lives on. Such a strong woman and a great role model for kindness and creating change. Strong, Smart and Confident.

— Cheryl Kiras
South Hadley MA

Cheryl Kiras - June 18, 2023 at 07:45 AM