

# JUDITH ANNE (SOWOLLA) BANZE



On May 2, 2024, Judith Anne (Sowolla) Banze passed away and the world lost an exceptional person. In recent years, Judy bravely faced health challenges with the grace and fortitude that defined her. During this time, she was lovingly supported by her family, who provided care and companionship throughout her journey. She is deeply mourned by Arthur Banze, her husband of 63 years, and her loving family

and wide circle of friends.

Judy was born and raised in Nanty-Glo, Pennsylvania. Growing up in coal country surrounded by the extended Sowolla family, she played outdoors with her beloved older brother, George, and developed a lifelong love of nature and physical activity. Judy attended Nanty-Glo High School, where she shined as the drum majorette, was selected queen of the first annual Old Home Week and graduated amongst the top of her class. She was a classic beauty, but it was her thoughtfulness, wit and genuine interest in others that made her friends everywhere she went in life.

Following high school, Judy sought new opportunities in the city, working as the secretary for the Dean of Student Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, where she met her soon-to-be husband, Art. A photographer from Life magazine enlisted Judy and other young people in the offices to gather at the top of the Cathedral of Learning and created an iconic moment of fans watching the World Series in Forbes Field. Judy is the young woman in the center of the shot with bracelets on her wrist cheering the Pirates. You know the picture.

Judy and Art married shortly after and settled down in Stanton Heights to raise their three children, making deep and lasting friendships with their neighbors. At their house on Simona Drive, Judy grew tomatoes and roses, watched the sunset over the backyard, and sat with loved ones on the glider on the front porch, often with a German Shepherd underfoot. Judy effected meaningful change in the community by working to have a playground built in the neighborhood, hosting movie nights at Sunnyside Elementary School, working on the famous Sunnyside cookbook and introducing Operation Identification to the PTA organization.

And of course there was Tennis. Judy fell in love with the game in the early 70s and played passionately in city leagues with her best friend Francis Vitti for over 40 years. Their group of tennis ladies played multiple times every week and enjoyed the lunches and drinks afterwards. Mom traveled to the US Open in NYC, saw the women's greatest players at an event in Monroeville and followed matches on TV. What else is there to say? She looked great in her tennis outfits and was fierce on the courts.

Judy's inquisitive mind led her to earning many professional certifications including a degree in Business Administration from CCAC. She was particularly proud of her work at the architecture firm Morgan Associates. As their valued office manager for over 35 years, she contributed to the success of award-winning projects throughout Pennsylvania and the United States. Judy participated in many research studies over the years at UPMC, contributing to advancements in medicine that will improve people's lives for years to come.

In 2001, Judy and Art moved to the "new house" in Franklin Park, where she relished the peace and quiet of the neighborhood, views of the trees off the back deck, and continued to garden and host family holiday dinners. Her scalloped potatoes were so good that she always had to make a triple batch or risk running out. Judy loved to travel and especially treasured family trips to the beach at the Outer Banks. We all have memories of Nana at the beach loving the sun and water and playing with her family on the sand.

Judy deeply loved her family and friends. No matter the situation, she was always there with open arms to bring you into a wonderful hug, to offer a listening ear, a cup of tea, or a delicious meal. Judy loved to read, and while she could often be found with the latest mystery novel, she enjoyed a wide range of writing. Her favorite poem was "'Hope" is the thing with feathers," by Emily Dickinson.

Judy was preceded in death by her mother, Anna Theresa (Sermeg) Sowolla, father, John "Yank" Sowolla and brother George Andrew Sowolla. Judy is survived by her husband, Arthur, and her children: Christina Barry (Banze) and husband Joseph Barry and their children Kate and Michael, his wife Lindsay and their children Daniel and Matthew; David Banze and wife Mariellen Banze (Graf) and their children Ellen and John; and Raymond Banze and wife Bonnie Banze (Murphy) and their children Rachael, Patrick, and Adam. Judy is survived by her sister, Anne Marie Sowolla, and many other cherished family members and friends.

Visitation with the family will be Tuesday, May 7 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., at the **ELOISE B. KYPER FUNERAL HOME**, 2702 Mt. Royal Blvd, Glenshaw, PA 15116 (located on the grounds of the Mount Royal Cemetery), followed by a memorial service at 4:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to The Parkinson Voice Project (<https://parkinsonvoiceproject.org/donate/>) or the Parkinson Foundation Western Pennsylvania (<https://pfpwpa.org/donate/>).

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