

NANCY SACUNAS



Born on November 7th, 1951, on the North Side of Pittsburgh, to parents she never knew, Nancy Sacunas was the true embodiment of resilience and grit. Nancy (a few months old) and her brother, Bobby (2) were found abandoned, crying, and malnourished by their neighbors and put into a Catholic orphanage. Nancy and Bobby were physically and mentally abused by their adopted parents for the duration of their upbringing. She graduated Millvale High School in 1969, at age 17, moved out and never looked back. She got a job working at the Bell Telephone Company (which later became AT&T) as a switchboard operator. This is also the place where she would meet her future husband and love of her life, Ronald (Ron).

Their first date (unbeknownst to her) was a work holiday party in the late 70s that Nancy and her friend planned, where she asked Ron (along with the rest of the office) if they were going to the holiday party. He said yes, and assumed it was a date! He proceeded to follow her around the entire night, and the rest is history. They married in 1981.

She worked at AT&T throughout the 70s, eventually leaving to work most of the 80s as a waitress at Highland Country Club in West View. She loved working all the weddings and various events. Nancy and her Highland community had an endless amount of humorous stories-it was described as the Caddyshack of the North Hills!

Nancy and Ron had long hoped for a child. To their immense surprise (and "a breathing attack," her words!), she found out she was pregnant for the first time at 40. She was determined to do better than both sets of parents did her, and she did. Nancy was an extraordinarily devoted mother to their only child, Robert (Robbie) Joseph Sacunas, born in June 1992, and she described it to people as the greatest day of her life. Ron continued to work at AT&T, and Nancy waited tables at night. Summers were always special at the Sacunas house, with frequent pool parties and cookouts. While other parents were always happy to send their children back to school in late summer, she cried, enjoying summers off with Robbie, and taking various summer vacations as a family to Ocean City, MD, and Lake Erie.

Nancy found her third career as a medical biller and auditor, graduating from Bidwell Training Center in 2003. She worked for the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center off and on for nearly 20 years. She loved reading the medical charts, and arguing with doctors over the wrong billing codes. In 2012, her beloved Ron was diagnosed with lung cancer, and later died in 2014. They were married 33 years. This was a devastating loss for her, made worse by her own breast cancer diagnosis only two years later. And while she did beat that cancer in 2017, her trials and tribulations did not end there. In 2022, she suffered a heart attack and was in a coma for five days. If you're sensing a pattern here, you could probably guess that she overcame that hurdle as well, with two new stents and a pacemaker. This forced her into a well deserved retirement, as she worked relentlessly her entire life. She found a new calling in retirement, working out four times a week at Sarah Heinz House, with her "Silver Sneakers" family.

Nancy was a proud lifetime Pittsburgher, embodying the Pittsburgh spirit of being a good neighbor and working hard. Always working on a house project, or helping a neighbor or friend in need. She loved Broadway musicals, showtunes, The Beatles (she saw them in 1964!), Judge Judy, Eat'n Park's salad bar, Richard Simmons workout tapes, anything to do with the royal family, a large Diet Coke from McDonalds, rewinding funny commercials to watch them over again, romance novels, the ocean, New York Times Crossword games and Pittsburgh sports, especially the Steelers and Pirates (Bob Nutting, if you're reading this, spend money on the team).

She will be missed by so many. Growing up without any role models or guidance, she was a self made woman, who loved helping other people. Always offering a ride to someone, or adopting an animal without a home (and there were many!). Nancy lived a good life in spite of the cards she was dealt, her small family was her world, and she was the toughest cookie God ever created.

Reunited with Ron and her many beloved pets in heaven. Survived by her son, Robbie; and her grandcat babies, Balto and Moo.

An endless inspiration, I love you forever Mom.

Family will welcome friends on Friday, December 27, 2024, from 2-8 pm at **SHELLHAAS FUNERAL HOME, INC.**, 388 Center Avenue, West View, PA 15229. Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Saturday, at 10 am, at Saint Aloysius Church St Mathews Parish.

Donations in Nancy's memory can be made to the Shaler Area North Hills Library, Sarah Heinz House, and/or Animal Friends.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb