

VANESSA (GARBER) STRASSNER



Suddenly on December 31, 2024, Vanessa (Garber) Strassner, age 52, of Cape May Courthouse, NJ, wife of Donald Strassner, went home to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Vanessa was one of four daughters of Carole and George Garber of Pittsburgh, PA. In addition to her husband and parents; she is survived by her sisters, Lauren Garber of Pittsburgh, Adrienne Garber of Pittsburgh, and Chelsea

Garber of New York.

Vanessa devoted her life to the training and advancement of children with special needs. She always said there was never a child (who she always affectionately referred to as her "kiddos") that could not be helped.

Starting with a degree in Public Health from Slippery Rock University, and with additional multiple Masters Degrees from Duquesne University in both Special Education and School Supervision and Administration, Vanessa had a 30-year career helping children and young adults. Starting for many years as a Special Ed Teacher and advancing to Special Ed Supervisor and Special Services Supervisor in multiple roles in multiple school districts, including Moon Township, Chartiers Valley, and Brentwood in her original home of Pittsburgh, PA, and Upper Township, Millville, and Cape May Tech in her and Donald's home of Southern New Jersey for the last eight years. A lifelong learner, Vanessa just recently earned her certification for School Superintendency in New Jersey, posting one of the highest scores ever for the certification tests.

According to Vanessa's best friend and trusted colleague, Dr. Cindy Zurchin, who first met Vanessa 25 years ago when Vanessa worked for Cindy in the Moon Township School District where Cindy was the Assistant Superintendent, "There will never be a person quite like Vanessa. She had a rare ability to see the potential in every child, fight for their needs, and give them the love and support they deserved. Her sharp mind, warm heart, and tireless work ethic made her a true beacon of hope. As I say goodbye to this remarkable woman, I will hold in my heart the image of her smiling face, always picture perfect with her beautiful dark hair, manicured nails, and impeccably coordinated outfits. Vanessa brought grace and joy wherever she went."

Along with her husband, Donald, a PGA Master Professional at the Union League National Golf Club in Avalon, she volunteered in the PGA Hope Program to assist veterans with disabilities.

Known for her bright smile and "can do" attitude for tackling problems and interacting with a wide variety of people, Vanessa often started meetings by handing out home baked cookies and home-made candies. She was so accomplished as a baker and confectionary maker, that, over the last two years she started her own cottage company, Confetti Cupboard, where she specialized in making over fifty varieties of artisan lollipops and special treats.

She was thoughtful and helpful especially to parents navigating the various ways they could seek help for their own special needs' children. She truly beamed when out in public she would bump into one of her graduated "kids," who would run to "Mrs. S" to tell her of their new job or their new success and accomplishments in life.

As we would walk away she would flash that infectious smile and say, "See, there is success always buried in every kiddo, if we just take the time to cultivate it and help them to grow and bloom."

A Memorial Service for Vanessa is planned for a later date at her home church, Ocean City Baptist, in Ocean City, NJ. In lieu of flowers, Vanessa would have requested that any contributions or donations in her honor be made to the Southern New Jersey veteran support group Project Refit at <https://www.projectrefit.us/donor>

Arrangements by the **WILLIAM F. CONROY FUNERAL HOME, INC., FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES.**

412-331-5192

www.wfconroyfuneralhome.com

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb