

*A
Celebration
of Life*



Kathleen A. Benjamin

Sunrise
October 6, 1935

Sunset
October 28, 2021

Service
Thursday, November 4, 2021 - 11:30 am

MCCALL'S BRONXWOOD FUNERAL HOME

4035 Bronxwood Avenue • Bronx, New York 10466

Rev. Dr. J. Loren Russell, Officiating

Min. Kevin Wade, Organist

Obituary

Kathleen Angela Benjamin, nee Conton, passed peacefully away at 3:35 a.m. on October 28, 2021. Born October 6, 1935, in Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI, she was an irresistible force. Nothing and no one stood in the way of her desires. Determined, fiercely maternal, she was unstoppable. You underestimated her at your own peril. A few years after graduating high school, she moved to New York to live with Euterpe Richardson, the sister of the man who would become her husband of 60 years, Ray O. Benjamin. Kathleen who was chatty, could strike up a conversation with anyone, anywhere. Ray was a quiet man, though it remains unclear if he was quiet by nature or because he couldn't squeeze a word in edgewise with his loquacious wife.

After three children and ten years as a "stay-at-home" mother, Kathleen became a para-professional at the school her children attended, PS 130 in the Bronx. She went on to earn her BA in education from Lehman College in 1979. She earned her Master's in education from City University of NY in 1991. She taught first grade in Community School District 8 in the New York City Public school system, primarily at P.S. 130, for 30 years until her retirement in 1997.

Always a firecracker, during a childhood beating she felt was particularly unjust, she instructed her mother, "Lick me, kill me and when you're done, bury me." Anyone familiar with Crucian parenting will know that the fact she lived to adulthood is a miracle. Later, when a colleague condescendingly asked her how she could afford to have all three sons in college at the same time, she lowered her voice and confided, "Many years ago my husband robbed a bank. He was never caught." [Family Disclaimer: As far as we know, Dad never, in fact, robbed a bank.]

When her sons were in college, she was much loved by their roommates for her regular care packages of home baked goods, save that one year she adopted a recipe for an eggless loaf of...something. Still her heart was big as the great outdoors and her nieces and nephews and her children's friends were swept into her heart and the Benjamin family.

Kathleen is survived by her sons Michael, Lawrence and Vernon; her cherished great nephew, who is a fourth son, Kenon Tutein, niece Denese Clay and friend Karen Mitchell, both of whom became the daughters she never had; daughter-in-law Susie Wong-Benjamin; son-in-law Stanley H. Willauer, Jr; grandsons Maxwell Vernon Jensen Benjamin and Xavier Ray Benjamin; sisters Joyce Tutein, Lucida Robles, Inez Thomas; brothers Alfred Conton, Jr. and Vernon Conton; and a host of loving nieces and nephews and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Ray O. Benjamin.

Donations in Kathleen's memory may be made to Dementia Society of America, PO Box 600, Doylestown, PA 18901 or dementiasociety.org.

Lord, you did but lend her to be our happiness. You reclaim her and we return her to you without murmuring but with a broken heart. —St. Jerome

Order of Service

PROCESSIONAL (Battle Hymn of The Republic).....Denese Clay
Clergy, Officers, Family

SONG OF Comfort (God Has Smiled on Me).....Denese Clay

SCRIPTURES

(Old Testament) Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8.....Steven Posnock)

(New Testament) Revelation 21: 2-7..... Stanley Willauer, Jr.

PRAYER OF COMFORTRev. Dr. J. Loren Russell

REFLECTIONS

Reading (On the Death of the Beloved)..... Susie Wong-Benjamin

SELECTION (Ode To Kathleen - Sleep Well).....Denese Clay

OBITUARY/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OF CONDOLENCES..... Kenon Tutein

EULOGY.....Michael Benjamin

WORDS OF COMFORT Rev. Dr. J. Loren Russell

THE COMMITTAL AND BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL (Goin Up Yonder).....Denese Clay

Interment
(Committal at graveside)
Rose Hills Memorial Park
Putnam Valley, New York

On the Death of the Beloved

John O' Donohue, from *To Bless the Space Between Us*

Though we need to weep your loss,
You dwell in that safe place in our hearts
Where no storm or night or pain can reach you.

Your love was like the dawn
Brightening over our lives,
Awakening beneath the dark
A further adventure of color.

The sound of your voice
Found for us
A new music
That brightened everything.

We look toward each other no longer
From the old distance of our names;
Now you dwell inside the rhythm of breath,
As close to us as we are to ourselves.

Though we cannot see you with outward eyes,
We know our soul's gaze is upon your face,
Smiling back at us from within everything
To which we bring our best refinement.

Let us not look for you only in memory,
Where we would grow lonely without you.
You would want us to find you in presence,
Beside us when beauty brightens,
When kindness glows
And music echoes eternal tones.

When orchids brighten the earth,
Darkest winter has turned to spring;
May this dark grief flower with hope
In every heart that loves you.

May you continue to inspire us:
To enter each day with a generous heart.
To serve the call of courage and love
Until we see your beautiful face again
In that land where there is no more separation,
Where all tears will be wiped from our mind,
And where we will never lose you again.

Acknowledgments

The family wishes to thank everyone who called or visited Kathy during her illness, especially her team of doctors and staff at Montefiore Medical Center and Calvary Hospital. Most especially they would like to recognize and thank Vernon Benjamin who was her primary caregiver over the last four years of her life.

Professional Service Entrusted To:

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