



Catherine Rice Parker

November 1, 1957 - February 25, 2019

Catherine Irene Rice Parker died peacefully at home on February 25, 2019.

Everyone who was fortunate enough to know Catherine was uplifted by her love, positivity and grace. Catherine's husband Ralph, daughter Elisabeth, siblings Sharon Gates and Robert Rice, extended family and friends will lovingly cherish her memory.

Catherine was born in Raleigh, NC on November 1, 1957 to John C. Rice and Elisabeth Evans Rice. She lived with her parents and siblings Jack, Sharon and Bob in Peru for part of her childhood.

Catherine graduated from Sanderson High School in Raleigh, NC in 1975 and then received a BS in Special Education from Appalachian State University in 1980.

Catherine's passion was teaching students with special needs.

She met her future husband, Ralph, while doing an internship at Western Carolina Center in Morganton in 1979.

Catherine moved to New Mexico in 1980 to teach and to be with Ralph.

She and Ralph moved to California in 1982. While there, Catherine worked for Xerox as a systems administrator. She enjoyed many outdoor activities and made many lifelong friends while living there.

Catherine and Ralph returned to North Carolina in 1989. She always loved plants and gardening and decided to make a career in that field. She returned to school and received a certificate in Landscape & Ornamentals from NC State's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

In 1995, Catherine and Ralph bought a house and beautiful piece of land in Apex so that Catherine could start a nursery business, specializing in plant propagation.

Years later, Catherine's career came full circle when she became an assistant teacher in a special needs classroom at Morehead Montessori in Durham, where, again, she many lifelong friends.

The Parker family house in Apex truly became home for Catherine. She launched a successful business there, raised a wonderful and loving daughter, hosted family holidays, started a couple of mahjong clubs, hosted author readings, gave and received love from her huge entourage of family and friends, handled the highs and lows of cancer treatment with grace and optimism, and then eventually reached the end of her life there.

Catherine made lifelong friends everywhere she lived and worked. Her network of close friends spans the country, and she made a lasting impact on those around her in every phase of her life. Everyone who shared part of their life with her is grateful for the generosity, unconditional positivity and brightness of heart that she carried, and she was grateful for them.

Catherine overflowed with love: she loved being a wife and mother, she loved her large extended family and many friends, she loved to cook and eat, to play mahjong, to be active outdoors, to garden, to go to the mountains and the beach.

Catherine requested that her family and friends wait for warmer weather to join together outdoors and celebrate her life. The date and location will be determined later.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Transitions LifeCare, the nonprofit organization that provided Catherine's hospice care and also provided support and comfort to her family. <https://transitionslifecare.org/>

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