



## Barbara Nichols Holmes

April 5, 1940 - July 20, 2025

Barbara Nichols Holmes had an abiding love of family, people, conversation, art, bonsai, flowers and nature. She was a mom, grandma, sister, aunt, friend, artist, life-long educator and learner, bonsai artist, Wordle buddy and world traveler. She passed away on July 20, 2025 at age 85.

Born on April 5, 1940 in Buffalo, NY, Barbara graduated from SUNY Cortland with a BS in Education. She raised 3 children and, at the age of 55, graduated from Rowan College with a MS in Environmental Education and Conservation.

Barbara and her husband, Bruce Holmes, moved 7 times during his 23-year Air Force career, eventually settling in 1979 in Mt. Laurel, NJ. She had a knack for getting her family settled at home and in the community in each new location.

She shared her passion for education throughout her life. Prior to having children, Barbara was an English teacher. Later, she developed and ran an environmental education program for Burlington County Girl Scouts serving thousands of elementary students over the years and was also very involved with the Delaware River Keeper Network. After receiving her Master's Degree, she was the education director at PAWS Farm in Mt. Laurel, NJ. Barbara loved being an integral part of a program that taught young people about animals and the natural world.

In 2005, Barbara moved to Cary, NC to be closer to her children and grandchildren. She continued to learn, educate and travel the world. Each of her grandchildren traveled with Grandma on a Road Scholar trip of their choice! Wanting to be of service, she volunteered for three weeks teaching English to students in the Cook Islands. She led nature hikes for the children of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh, volunteered at the NC Museum of Art and, among other things, facilitated outdoor experiences.

Barbara was a perpetual student and artist. In her retirement, she travelled with Road Scholar, became a serious bonsai artist and took numerous art classes. She painted, printed and made paper. During Covid she embraced on-line learning, participating in OLLI and Smithsonian classes on a variety of topics. Barbara enrolled in on-line exercise and art classes and loved the human connection that they provided.

She is survived by her children, Katie (Christine) Holmes of Cary, NC and Jeff (Amy) Holmes of Greensboro, NC; her grandchildren, Tia (Patrick) Holmes, Natalya Ryan, Nicholas Holmes and Eli Holmes whom she loved dearly. She also leaves behind her brothers William (Helen) Nichols and Robert Nichols; and many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

Barbara was preceded in death by her artistic and colorful daughter, Elizabeth; brother Ted Nichols; mother Margaret Beltz Nichols; father William Nichols; and niece Kristin Nichols.

Barbara Nichols Holmes loved well and was so very loved. She will be missed by all who knew her.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Barbara's memory to Note in the Pocket <https://noteinthepocket.org/> , the Foodbank of Central and Eastern

North Carolina <https://foodbankcenc.org/> , or have a tree planted in her memory through the Arbor Day Foundation <https://shop.arborday.org/>

# Tribute Wall

JA

“ I loved spending time with Barbara working on her bonsai and sharing the art we both love. You will be missed, Barbara!

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**Jacob** - August 01, 2025 at 08:15 AM

BL

*Hello Jacob.*

*This is Brian. I helped Barbara every spring, and fall, to prepare her deck. I think I've help her for 8 years. I know she will leave a very big void, in everyone who knew and loved her.*

*I am just finding out, she has passed, because she has not called me for putting the trees in there winter beds. I looked up her name. And here I am.*

*So sorry for everyone who knew, and loved her.*

*RIP my dear friend, Barbara.*

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**Brian Lowell** - November 30, 2025 at 12:18 PM

JK

“ Dear Katie and Jeff, Please accept my condolences on the loss of your dearest Mom. We were friends since kindergarten. I will miss her presence.

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**Jacqui Keller** - July 30, 2025 at 12:24 AM