



Jan Elaine Brooks Barbee

July 28, 1941 - July 15, 2025

Jan Barbee, 83, passed away peacefully at her home in Cary, NC, surrounded by the love of family and friends. She often expressed gratitude for a life filled with joy, love, and cherished memories.

Born in Washington, GA, to Dr. Henry C. Brooks, Jr., and Joyce Ingalls Brooks, Jan moved with her family to Conway, SC after her father's service in World War II. There, she and her three younger siblings enjoyed a serene childhood along the Waccamaw River, near Myrtle Beach.

Jan graduated from Duke University, where she double majored in English and History. At Duke she met Ron Barbee, who was from just outside a small, sleepy N.C. town of 5,000 named Cary. That meeting sparked a love that led to their marriage in Duke Chapel 62 years ago. Their life together unfolded in two beautiful chapters: half of those years in Raleigh raising their four children, the other half in Cary, where they delighted in living very near all of their grandchildren.

In Raleigh, Jan and Ron raised their active family amidst a tight-knit community of friends, many connected through Ron's career with two great companies: KPMG Peat Marwick and Investors Management Corporation. A very large number of those dear people became lifelong friends.

As her children neared college age, Jan taught for a few years at Millbrook

High School as she prepared for the dreaded empty nest period that was certain to come. But that period never came. The first grandchild arrived 35 years ago, and she was still driving carpool up until the time she went into hospice care last month.

Jan was an avid reader. She found joy in books and poetry, and shared that passion with others. Especially her grandchildren; they spent hours reading to each other.

In Cary, a small parcel known as “the farm” that has been in Ron’s family many years, became a haven for family. This of course was not a real farm because, by definition, a farm must produce income! This property was more focused on raising blue-ribbon children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Gentle horses, peacocks, bantam roosters, and always a huggable Tom Turkey strutting about. Scuppernong grapes, watermelons, homemade ice cream, big front porch with lots of swings and children laughing in the dark. Occasionally the children playing in the dark could see a light in the attic of the old farmhouse, giving proof of the presence of the rumored friendly ghost named Cloud. For some strange reason, that light was never visible when the adults looked toward it.

And always birds and flowers. Her deep love for nature brought her peace and wonder in its smallest details.

Jan was predeceased by her parents, and in 1979 by a sister Linda Brooks Ratelle.

Jan is survived by Ron, their four children and their families. She is also survived by a sister, Joyce Talley, and a brother, Henry Brooks, III, both of Atlanta.

Jan and Ron’s four children and their families are:

Dr. Elizabeth Barbee Gibbons, her husband Dr. Gregory R. Gibbons, of Cary. Their three children: daughter Marie Gibbons, (with Martin Ollinen), Sweden. Daughter Kathryn (Kitty) Gibbons, (with Evan Shinn), Marshall, NC, and son Ron Gibbons.

Brooks Barbee, his wife Jessica Quaini, of Cary. His four sons: Jackson Barbee, (wife Shannon Barbee), Gabe Barbee, Ian Viana and Ethan Viana.

Diana Barbee, her husband Dr. Dennis Shelden; Vermont.

Chris Barbee, his wife Dr. Elizabeth Roede Barbee of Cary. Their three children: Will Barbee, Annie Barbee and Brooks Barbee.

A celebration of Jan's life will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cary on Wednesday, July 23rd at 1 PM. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Paul's Episcopal Church or to Transitions LifeCare in Raleigh.

Jan's warmth, love, and spirit will live on in the hearts of all who knew her.

Cemetery Details

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Memorial Garden

221 Union St
Cary, NC 27511
<http://stpaulscary.org>

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 23. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
221 Union St
Cary, NC 27511

Tribute Wall



“ *Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Jan Elaine Brooks Barbee.*



July 22, 2025 at 12:53 PM



“ *Roede Family (Chris, Grace, H, B and S) purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Jan Elaine Brooks Barbee.*



Roede Family (Chris, Grace, H, B and S) - July 19, 2025 at 12:45 PM



“ *Roede Family (Chris, Grace, H, B and S) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jan Elaine Brooks Barbee.*

Roede Family (Chris, Grace, H, B and S) - July 19, 2025 at 12:45 PM



“ *Ronald. so very sorry to hear your sad news. Although I did not know Jan well she was always very nice at our gatherings Class of 1961. Cancer is an awful disease I know it well. You take care sending you and family prayers and hugs. Sue Cameron Burgess*

Sue Burgess - July 17, 2025 at 09:49 PM