



Barbara Ann (Watson) Grissom Hillery

January 12, 1935 - August 2, 2021

Barbara Ann (Watson) Grissom Hillery passed away Monday, August 2, 2021 following heart surgery. Friends will be surprised to learn her age; she looked decades younger and took great pleasure in being mistaken as a sister to her twin daughters.

Barb was born in Galveston, TX, graduated from Southern Methodist University, and resided in Texas until the death of her first husband, Dan B. Grissom. She then joined her daughter in Indiana, where her life's journey took an unexpected turn. In Barb's own words, "I met a very nice man from Columbus who I thought would be a great friend. Two years later I married that new best friend!"

She and Rex shared a love of travel and explored many countries spread across five continents. Barb was an avid bridge player (described as "ruthless" by one opponent), tennis player and IU basketball fan. She also enjoyed participating in a local book club and Bloomington's Conversation Club, Newcomers Club and YMCA.

Barb's friends will remember her unfailing positive outlook on life and her ability to learn a stranger's life story in five minutes (or less). Her grandchildren (who know her as Gigi) will always admire her as their "fashionista" and be in awe of her "superpower" - an uncanny ability to appear when least expected. Neighbors will remember seeing Barb and Rex on their frequent walks and for their habit of greeting children (and their parents) at the school bus with fresh baked cookies after their first and last days of school.

Barb also had an amazing gift for finding a parking spot, no matter the time of day or location, and was often spotted tooling around town in her little green VW convertible.

Barb's professional history ranged from teaching kindergarten through 10th grade in Texas as well as serving on her local school board; in Bloomington, she served as executive director of Abilities Unlimited, supervised First Call for Help and facilitated a support group for brain injury survivors and their families.

She leaves behind her beloved husband of 26 years, Walter Rex Hillery; adult children Lynda (Jerry) Robison (Columbus, IN), Brenda (Jerry) Stern (Bloomington, IN) and Scott (Jane) Grissom (Jenison, MI); granddaughters Lauren Stern (Bloomington, IN), Robyn Stern (Vashon Island, WA), Samantha Grissom (Philadelphia, PA), Alexandre Grissom (Los Angeles, CA), and Danielle Robison (Columbus, IN); adult stepsons James (Valda) Hillery (Indianapolis, IN) and Andrew (Arine) Hillery (Bloomington, IN); and grandsons Kai and Kean Hillery (Bloomington, IN).

A Celebration of Life will be held to honor Barb at a date to be announced.

Her family requests that, in lieu of flowers/donations, people extend her legacy by performing random acts of kindness in her honor.

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory have been entrusted with arrangements.

Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at

www.allencares.com

Tribute Wall

LI

“ I always admired Barb. She was kind, thoughtful and caring. It was a match made in heaven when Rex and Barb met. Their lives revolved around each other, their family and their many friends and acquaintances.

Even though I hadn't seen Barb for awhile....it saddens me to learn of her passing .

I feel very fortunate to have known her.

Rex, Randy and I are thinking of you and your family.....

Linda Allman

Linda - August 15, 2021 at 03:48 PM

AM


“ met Barbara when I first moved to America and she was truly like a mother to me. In this foreign country, she was like a light that was full of kindness, encouragement and love. We were able to stay in touch even after I moved, and I will be eternally grateful for our friendship and the guidance she provided those years. Barbara was beautiful both inside and out, a soul that anybody would have been lucky to meet. Thank you Barbara, we miss you dearly❤️❤️

Asel Minbaeva - August 12, 2021 at 08:45 PM

CM

“ We are so sad to learn of the passing of Barb. She was the loveliest and kindest person one could know. She was kind and supportive of everyone extending her warmth and care to so many people. And she was a great chef! She and Rex were the role model for what a Bloomington resident can offer to the community. We know Rex has so many great memories of their life together. Cheryl and David Moeller

Cheryl Moeller - August 10, 2021 at 10:50 AM

 Beth Long

“ Barb was the perfect neighborhood grandma to our 4 kids!! We loved seeing her at the bus stop and on her walks. She was always encouraging, kind, and a great listener!! Rex, we are thinking of you and your family!! Love, Beth Long and family

Beth Long - August 09, 2021 at 10:23 AM

AB

“ Barb and Rex greeted our kids at the bus stop, which was just down from their driveway, like loving grandparents! They would come out and say hello, bring fresh cookies, freshly baked bread, and smiles. Barb was the most friendly resident of our neighborhood—hands down. She and Rex were avid walkers and would stop and make conversation with everyone in the neighborhood. They kept tabs on our kids and pets. They even loaned us their tetherball pole and helped us lug it down to our yard. Barb was just about the best neighbor we could've asked for. She was the best, in every sense of the word, and she will be greatly missed.

Andy and Beth - August 09, 2021 at 10:14 AM

RT

“ Rex, sorry to hear about Barbara. Always enjoyed you both at Exchange Club. We still have your Mustang and are still enjoying it! Your in our thoughts. Hope to see you soon.

Rhett and Cheryl Tharp

Rhett Tharp - August 08, 2021 at 11:04 PM

DH

“ i did barbs hair for a long time, always looked forward to her coming in. she always wanted to make sure i was ok. she brought me treats. and we always had fun when she came in. we called her beetle bug because of her little green vw. loved her and will miss her always. rest in peace my friend.

david hiestand - August 08, 2021 at 01:22 PM