

Tribute to Diane Clare Williams

Diane Clare Williams, lovingly known to her family as "Nana," passed away peacefully on February 23, 2025, in Houston, Texas, at the age of 89, surrounded by her children and her loving partner of over 30 years, Frederick Owen Benn Jr.

Born May 30, 1935, to Jetty V. and Lillie Mae Clare in Coleman, Texas, Diane lived a life filled with love, learning, and devotion to her family and friends. As a newspaperman in northwest Texas, her father moved the family several times during Diane's childhood, finally settling in Haskell, Texas when Diane was a sophomore in high school. Her father was also an avid horseman, and Diane grew up riding horses from a young age. Her mother was a pianist and insisted that Diane take piano lessons from the time she was six years old, a practice she continued well into her fifties. As a very accomplished pianist and organist, Diane was the accompanist for Sunday services, weddings, and funerals at the Baptist and Methodist churches in Haskell, TX, and played the organ for summer camp at the Glorieta Baptist Assembly, northeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

After graduating from Haskell High School, Diane attended Baylor University for her undergraduate degree, before earning a Master's in Education from The University of Texas. As a young woman, Diane taught elementary school children on the East Side of Houston and later Pre-K at The Kinkaid School.

Married to Dr. Temple Williams Jr. in 1958, Diane and Temple settled into their home in West University Place in 1965 where they raised their two children, Holly and Temple III, and from the time they were born, her children were the primary focus of her life. The couple later divorced, but the families continued to celebrate milestones of their children and grandchildren.

Diane was an avid reader and lifelong learner, and a devoted member of the Rice University Philosophy Club. She had a deep love for ice skating and competed in ice dancing competitions for many years. She also took ballet classes well into her fifties at the Dyche-Yezer School of Ballet in Houston.

Diane's faith was a cornerstone of her life. Diane was a devoted member of St. Luke's United Methodist Church for 65 years and actively participated in Randy Smith's Bible study throughout that time. Diane served on numerous committees, participated in several mission trips, was a member of several women's circle groups, and attended various Bible study groups. She also was a frequent attendee at retreats at Laity Lodge, finding spiritual renewal and fellowship there.

Diane cherished time spent with loved ones and was known for her warmth and hospitality. She delighted in entertaining friends and family in her beautiful home in West University Place, where she lived for over six decades and raised her children along with the other Nottingham families. She shared many wonderful years with her beloved partner Frederick Owen Benn Jr. ("Papa"), with whom she built a life rich in love and faith. Together, they were longtime members of Randy Smith's Bible study group at St. Luke's. They enjoyed traveling and embarked on many trips together over the years. They also enjoyed being with family and friends at the family farm in Caldwell and on many beach trips from coast to coast.

Diane is survived by: her partner of over 30 years, Frederick Owen Benn Jr.; her daughter, Dr. Holly Clare Williams and husband, Harvey Michael Giblin; her son, Temple Weatherly Williams III and spouse, Valerie Hoffman; granddaughters Weatherly Clare Giblin and Sullivan Clare Williams; Sullivan's mother, Cyndi Finkle; ex-husband Dr. Temple Williams, Jr. and spouse Joan Williams; cousins Beverly Cox and her children and grandchildren and husband George; and Larry Hinds and his partner Jack Oswald. Diane is preceded in death by her cousin, Bob Armstrong of Lake Jackson, TX. She is survived by his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, as well as children and grandchildren of cousins Suzanne Wood Brown (former spouse Kerry Grombacher) and Clare Wood, who also preceded her in death.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to St. Luke's United Methodist Church's general fund, the woodshop, or outreach ministry (PO Box 22013, Houston, TX 77227-2013), to the Christian Community Service Center (C.C.S.C., PO Box 27924, Houston, Texas 77227), or to a charity of your choice in her name.