



Deborah Irene Drew Kaska

Date of Birth

September 27, 1941

Date of Death

December 27, 2022

City of Death

Encinitas, CA

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Deborah Irene Drew Kaska, 81, who died after a fall on December 27, 2022. Debbie's entire family was with her in her last days celebrating life at the beach. Her children were by her side when she passed. Debbie is preceded in death by her beloved husband William C. Kaska and brother Donald E. Drew.

Debbie was born in Berwyn, IL to Harvey and Irene Drew (nee Genke). She enjoyed playing clarinet and oboe and spent her summers at Interlochen Arts Camp in Michigan. After graduating from Glenbard High School, she attended the University of Michigan earning her BS/MS in Biology. As a student and Phi Mu Sorority sister Debbie earned extra money washing equipment for the Chemistry Department. It was there that she met her future husband, Bill, who was a graduate student. The couple later settled in Goleta, California and raised four children.

In 1980, Debbie earned her Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). In collaboration with researchers at the Univ of Oulu Finland, she studied many aspects of green algae. Later she served as the Academic Coordinator at the UCSB Department of Biological Sciences overseeing the Introductory Biology lab. Debbie conducted research on a broad variety of topics, including bird songs, vision, pine roots, and the genetic diversity of the Channel Islands Ironwood trees.

After retiring from UCSB in 2002, Debbie (affectionately known as, "Maka" to her grandchildren) traveled to visit her family and friends and explored the world. She

played oboe with the SB Prime Time Band and volunteered with the SB County Genealogy Society, serving as the board secretary and editor of Ancestors West. She was also skilled in translating old German script and spoke German fluently. Debbie was involved in several organizations, including serving as VP, Patriotic Instructor, and President of Tent 22 for the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War and as Chapter VP for the Colonial Dames of America SB Chapter. She was also a member of the Mission Canyon Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Her community involvement and curiosity never wavered and her friends and neighbors benefitted from her many gifts.

Debbie is survived by her children, Serge Kaska, Kristin Woolley (Douglas), Marya Darabont (Tibor), and Kathleen Perez (James), as well as seven grandchildren. A memorial mass will be held in her honor on Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 10:30 AM at San Roque Catholic Church, 325 Argonne Circle, Santa Barbara, California with a 12:30 PM reception to follow at the Glen Annie Golf Club, 405 Glen Annie Rd. Goleta, California. Donations in her honor may be sent to the Prime Time Band, P.O. Box #92055, Santa Barbara, CA 93190.