

Mary Ann Kuczynski McDonald



November 12, 2020

Mary Ann Kuczynski McDonald, 76, ended her hard-fought battle with Alzheimer's dementia on November 12, 2020. Born on February 14, 1944 in Pensacola, Florida, she was the only child of Edward Kuczynski and Althea Whiting Kuczynski. She shared her life with her husband, Duran Greene McDonald, for 53 years.

Mary Ann attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst and began her teaching career in Long Beach, California, where she subsequently met Duran who was serving the United States Navy. They soon married on July 8, 1967 in Springfield, Massachusetts. Her teaching spanned the states of California, Georgia, and finally to North Carolina, where she received a Masters of Education in Reading at Winthrop University. Her most cherished years of teaching were in the halls of Myers Park Methodist Church as a two- and three-year-old preschool teacher, lovingly nicknamed "McDonald". She left us in the fall, her favorite season, the one where she reveled in the awe of her small students witnessing the miracle of a tiny acorn becoming the giant oak tree outside the classroom window.

Following her years of teaching, "DeeDee" most enjoyed making playdough with her grandchildren, knitting prayer shawls for her church, eating lunch with friends and choir members, and organizing the food assignments for her long-time dinner group of 40 years. She made each of her children feel like the most important person in the world: shopping consignment stores with Jenny, making Matt his favorite poppy seed cake, and endlessly driving Anna to choir practice. In more recent years, even as the

dementia was slowly taking her from us, she would still laugh and pull weeds in the yard with her two youngest grandchildren, Amina and Hamza.

She felt closest to God watching the egrets at the salt marsh of Bald Head Island and in the dirt while planting black-eyed Susans outside the mountain house in Boone. While Myers Park Methodist was her church building, nature too was her sanctuary.

Mary Ann and Duran were long time members of Myers Park Methodist Church. As members of the Builder's Sunday School Class for over 50 years, Mary Ann found true lifelong friends. Some of her favorite moments at the church included singing with her best friends in the Women's Choir and organizing the poinsettias for the Christmas services with the Altar Guild. Without fail, a college-aged member of the congregation would turn around at each Christmas service and say, "Hi, McDonald! You taught me when I was three-years-old!".

Mary Ann is survived by her husband, Duran Greene McDonald; daughter and son-in-law, Dr. Jennifer McDonald Willard and Mr. Derrick Duane Willard; son and daughter-in-law, Dr. John Matthew McDonald and Mrs. Cherie Norton McDonald; daughter and life partner, Dr. Anna Greene McDonald and Ms. Angela Key; aunt, Helen Danie; first cousins, Diane Diamond, Rob Danie, Greg Sokolowski, and Beth-Ann Kalinko; and a multitude of grandchildren whom she loved so dearly, Andrew McDonald Willard, Anna Grace Willard, Caroline Merritt McDonald, Mary Elizabeth McDonald, Charlotte Harding McDonald, Amina Greene Ahmad, and Hamza Greene Ahmad. Mary Ann is predeceased by her parents, Edward and Althea Kuczynski; beloved aunt and uncles, Mrs. Alfreda "Tedge" Sokolowski, Mr. Michael Sokolowski, Jr., and Mr. Leo "Pete" Danie.

Due to COVID restrictions, a private service will be held at 2 pm on November 20, 2020 at Myers Park United Methodist Church. Friends and family are also invited to view the service by the church's livestream. Interment will follow the service at the Myers Park Methodist Church columbarium.

Donations in her memory may be made for Alzheimer's research at Wake Forest Baptist Health by contacting philanthropy@wakehealth.edu or to her beloved music ministry at Myers Park Methodist Church by contacting lindae@mpumc.org.

Her family will remember her over the dinner table nightly with her preschool classroom blessing: "Thank you, God, for happy hearts, for rain and sunny weather. Thank you for the food we eat, and we are all together". We will adore her all our days.