



## Diane Benjamin

February 23, 1942 - May 30, 2025

Georgia Diane Stratas Benjamin, 83, of Evanston, passed away peacefully May 30, 2025, after a long decline in health.

The eldest of five children born in Toronto, Canada, to a veterinarian and a nurse, both of Greek descent, Diane graduated from West Hill Collegiate Institute in Scarborough. After earning her Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Montana, Missoula, she returned to Toronto to work at the Toronto Telegram, and then to St. Louis, Missouri, for United Press International (UPI). It was there, one auspicious spring day that she answered the phone and said, "St. Louis Newsroom- it's Greek Easter and if you want a story, you can come down here and file it yourself, I'm going to church!" On the other end of the line was one Bob Benjamin.

After burning up the phones for weeks, Diane flew to Chicago with no idea who she was looking for, as Bob told her he was missing one ear and provided only a photo booth strip of his hand covering his face and the side of his head. Diane had to look up "Assyrian" when her new friend mentioned his ethnicity.

She walked through the concourse, towards a lanky man resting against a pole, whom she correctly guessed to be Bob. He was leaning because he was tired, as he'd worked back-to-back shifts at the UPI newsroom to

accommodate his guest, and managed to fall asleep during their date- a production of "Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern are Dead". Bob and Diane were engaged within six weeks and married within five months, on August 16, 1969. It was the social event of the season, with a guestlist exceeding 500. The couple had a six-week old infant by their first anniversary.

In 1973, they moved to Pittsburgh, where Bob worked for UPI before being assigned to Washington, D.C. Diane ran a day care out of their house in McLean, VA, largely for the children of people suspected to be CIA Agents. They welcomed their second child in 1975.

In 1977, the family returned to Chicago's Peterson Park neighborhood, where Diane raised their children, volunteered on neighborhood associations, and served as the director of the Greek-American Parade on Michigan Avenue. After the kids were in school, Diane worked in public relations at Michael Reese and Loretto hospitals, before working for Cook County Commissioner and later Treasurer Maria Pappas and serving as Evanston's Deputy Tax Assessor, where she strove to make residents aware of available tax relief.

Diane was a sensitive soul, known for random acts of kindness, taking over projects from others, and fighting good fights. She was extremely generous in her gift-giving and often reached out to strangers in need.

Beloved wife of 55 years to Robert "Bob" Benjamin, loving mother of Brooke Elisabeth (Robert Zrenner) Benjamin and Robert "Rob" J. J. Benjamin.

Survived by sisters Susan Jonne (Jon) Stewart of Hamilton, Ontario and Lynda Stratas Parrish of Arizona.

Preceded in death by parents Dr. John "Jack" Nicholas Stratas and Georgiann "Georgie" Demetra Logos Stratas of Toronto, brother William David Stratas ("Billy") of Vancouver Island, and infant sister, Jacqueline Stratas (Billy's twin).

Also preceded in death by canine friends Odishoo “Odi” the miniature Schnauzer and Eddy the poodle, both of whom loved her more than anyone.

Memorial service Wednesday, June 11, at Colvin House, 5940 N Sheridan Rd, Chicago, 60660. 5pm guest arrival. Service begins at 6pm. Reception to follow.

You may livestream the event here: <https://www.asimplestreaming.com/dbenjamin>

Limited free parking available at Swift School and Emanuel Congregation. Please allow travel and parking time. Rideshare or carpooling is recommended.

Memorial donations may be made in her name to Howard Brown Health Center, <https://howardbrown.org/>.

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care, 773-318-1305 or [www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com](http://www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com).

# Previous Events

## Service

JUN 11. 5:00 PM - 8:30 PM (CT)

Colvin House  
5940 N Sheridan Rd  
Chicago, IL 60660  
<http://www.ColvinHouseEvents.com>

*5:00pm guest arrival. Service begins at 6pm. Reception to follow.*

# Tribute Wall



“ *Inclusive Funeral Care created a Tribute Video in memory of Diane Benjamin*



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**Team Inclusive Funeral Care** - June 10, 2025 at 04:42 PM



“ *Inclusive Funeral Care created a Webcast in memory of Diane Benjamin*



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**Team Inclusive Funeral Care** - June 03, 2025 at 06:02 PM



“ *Beautiful women, had grace and held dignity besides all her challenges, she maintained poise.*

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**Karen Lynn Khano** - April 03 at 03:13 PM



“ *Our condolences  
Gary and Dale San Filippo*

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**Gary Sanfilippo** - October 26, 2025 at 10:22 PM

RJ

“ I remembered the wedding day. It was beautiful and Diana looked great. Robert and Diane have wonderful memories. With my deepest condolences to you and your I family.

Ruth Jacob - June 12, 2025 at 02:46 PM

LG

“ Lauren G. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Diane Benjamin.

Lauren G. - June 11, 2025 at 08:21 PM

GB

“ Diane was a friend who always made me laugh and also think. I will miss her so.

Gina in Brazil - June 11, 2025 at 06:46 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Diane Benjamin.

June 11, 2025 at 06:43 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Diane Benjamin.



June 11, 2025 at 06:43 PM



“ A grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Diane Benjamin.

June 11, 2025 at 04:12 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Diane Benjamin.



June 11, 2025 at 11:43 AM



“ Dr. Robert and Patti Krueger planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Diane Benjamin.

**Dr. Robert and Patti Krueger** - June 10, 2025 at 05:07 PM



“ Dr. Robert and Patti Krueger purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Diane Benjamin.



**Dr. Robert and Patti Krueger** - June 10, 2025 at 05:07 PM

TR

“ Tyra Poindexter - First Call Responders planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Diane Benjamin.

Tyra Poindexter - First Call Responders - June 10, 2025 at 04:27 PM

TR

“ Tyra Poindexter - First Call Responders purchased the Forever in our Hearts - Memory for the family of Diane Benjamin.



Tyra Poindexter - First Call Responders - June 10, 2025 at 04:27 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Diane Benjamin.



June 10, 2025 at 10:04 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Diane Benjamin.

June 06, 2025 at 01:48 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Diane Benjamin.*



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June 06, 2025 at 01:48 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Diane Benjamin.

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June 05, 2025 at 04:37 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Diane Benjamin.*



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June 05, 2025 at 04:37 PM



“ *My deepest condolences to the surviving family, especially my friend, Brooke. She sounds like a wonderful woman. May her memory be a blessing in your life, Brooke. Mitch*

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**Mitch Paradise** - June 04, 2025 at 02:37 PM

TF

“ *The Risk Family purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Diane Benjamin.*



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**The Risk Family** - June 04, 2025 at 04:08 AM

IR

“ *Diane and I had a wonderful friendship during the 60's in Toronto as our Greek families were instrumental in bringing us together. When Diane moved away to get married we continued our connection through many phone calls over the years. Good memories. Although I never met Bob, she spoke lovingly of him. May her memory be eternal. 💕🇨🇦*  
*Irene (Bulucon) Rueckwart*

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**Irene Rueckwart** - June 03, 2025 at 05:59 PM

JC

“ *Bob,*  
*What a wonderful obituary. What a wonderful love story.*  
*Jerry Crimmins*

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**Jerry Crimmins** - June 03, 2025 at 04:08 PM

EJ

“ *My deepest condolences to the family. I attended Diane and Bob's wedding. She was a lovely bride. So glad they had so many years together. May you be blessed with many good memories.*

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**Esther Jacob** - June 02, 2025 at 10:18 PM

JT

“ Robert and family. Sorry for your loss. I remember Seeing Diane early in your courtship in Chicago and then in events here in Michigan. May her memory be be for a Blessing. Julie Lazar Taylor, Flint, Michigan.

Julie Taylor - June 02, 2025 at 07:13 PM



“ Gracie Kovacs lit a candle in memory of Diane Benjamin



Gracie Kovacs - June 02, 2025 at 08:56 AM

AG

“ Anne G. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Diane Benjamin.

Anne G. - June 02, 2025 at 08:46 AM

AB

“ I was a friend of Diane's sister Susan and when Diane graduated from college and came home to Toronto. She started working at the Telegram and she lived for a while at my Grandparents rooming house. There it was New Years Eve and my grandparents were home alone, Diane did a beautiful article in the Telegram on seniors at New Years. I still have that article. Rest in peace Diane! I am glad that I got to see you last fall.

Love

Anne G Bodnar

Anne G Bodnar - June 02, 2025 at 08:37 AM