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Dorothy Marlene Garcia

Oct. 12, 1945 - Feb. 15, 2022

Dorothy Marlene Garcia, 76, of Morganton, NC passed away Tuesday, February 15, 2022. She was born October 12, 1945 in Modesto, California to Nolan and Dorothy (Herzog) Murrell. At the age of two, Marlene was hospitalized with influenza spinal meningitis. The virus took her hearing, but, as she continued to do her entire life, she adapted.

After attending several schools for the handicapped in her childhood she found a place to prosper in the California School for the Deaf in Riverside, California and then CSD in Berkley. There she met the love of her life on her way to graduating in 1966. She went on to graduate from Gallaudet College in Washington D.C. in 1972.

During her time at Gallaudet she married her high school sweetheart, Phillip Michael Garcia, in Willow Springs, Missouri where her family had relocated. After graduation, she followed Phillip to Saint Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands (not Virginia as they both expected…). While there, she taught local parents American Sign Language to help them communicate with their deaf children before teaching children at Abraham Lincoln School.

In 1975, they made their decision to move back stateside and joined friends and a strong deaf community in Morganton, NC. Marlene began teaching elementary

school and spent 30 years working with students. She loved teaching and she took pride in watching her students advance and grow at the NC School for the Deaf.

Marlene was an active in the National Association for the Deaf, Junior National Association for the Deaf, and NCSD's Booster club to name a few. In her personal time, she loved her bridge club, noon lunches and her Red Hat Society. Much like her mom before her, she enjoyed (and relished in winning) at any card game you put in front of her. She had many crafting hobbies and her cross stitching found its way into many family and friend's homes.

Adapting again, after the loss of her daughter, she had been raising her granddaughter since 2014, a role she cherished. She had many roles throughout life: sister, educator, mother, grandmother, UNC basketball fan among the many and she poured her heart into each and every one.

Marlene was preceded in death by her parents, Nolan and Dorothy Murrell, her daughter, Melissa Diane Garcia and her brother Franklin Oscar Murrell.

She is survived by her loving husband of over 50 years, Phillip Michael Garcia and her granddaughter Carlee Mae Garcia of the family home; her son, Phillip Scott Garcia (wife, Debbie McDermott) of Durham, NC; her brothers, Nolan Murrell (wife, Kay) of Redmond, OR, Everett Murrell (wife, Jeannie) of Oceanside, CA, Thomas Cain (wife, Lana) of Mountain Grove, MO, Lonnie Cain (wife, Linda) of Willow Springs, MO, and Stillman Cain of Mountain Grove, MO; sister and best friend, Diane Jeffery of Willow Springs, MO; sisters-in-law Janice Murrell of Bend, OR Linda Mattson (husband, Ken) of Morganton; and numerous nieces and nephews. She loved her entire family dearly.

A celebration of Marlene's life will be held at 1:00pm Saturday, June 18, 2022 at Sossoman Funeral Home with the Pastor Mike Chandler officiating. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the NCSD at Morganton Foundation, P.O. Box 1397, Morganton, NC 28680.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.