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Nancy Jane Craven Madison

Nov. 3, 1934 - May 30, 2026

Nancy Jane Craven Madison died peacefully May 30, 2026 in Morganton, North Carolina. She was 91.

Nancy enjoyed a 70-year love affair with James Thomas Madison, Sr. who survives her. Nancy met Jim at Appalachian State College when Jim spied her, the most beautiful woman he would ever see, sitting at the cool kids' table in the college bookstore in 1955. Nancy had a large pack of friends at Appalachian she kept up with her whole life long. Competition for Nancy's attention was fierce, but Jim prevailed. They were married September 14, 1958 and lived a loving relationship that was the envy of all who have known them.

Nancy was born November 3, 1934, in North Wilkesboro, in Wilkes County, North Carolina, to William Atlee Craven and Mamie Lorena Hays Craven. She grew up in Asheboro, in Randolph County, North Carolina. A straight-A student over her whole education, she graduated from Asheboro Senior High School in 1953 and from Appalachian in 1957, with a degree in Elementary Education. She went on to change the lives of thousands of students in Asheboro, NC, Silver Springs, MD, Statesville, NC, Dillon, SC, Charleston, SC, and Morganton, NC, over a span of 40 years.

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She never raised her voice in her classroom. Misbehavior was simply not an option. She was teacher, mentor, guidance counsellor, mother, and social worker for her students, many of whom credit her as the best teacher they ever had, the teacher who changed the trajectory of their lives. She was the champion of her students most at risk. She could shut down bullies in an instant. A walk around town in Morganton would frequently see a student from years before giving her a hug and telling her of their accomplishments which they assured her were due to her treating them as special when no one else did.

Nancy had a thick group of friends, from high school, to college, to the Gay Blades Garden Club in Statesville, to the Dancing Girls in Morganton. She held court wherever she went.

Nancy was the coolest mom ever! For her three boys, Charlie, Sam, and Jamie, she planned lavish birthday parties, made Halloween costumes, and scored a 100 in every final exam of Motherhood 101: Christmas! She found the perfect gifts, made the perfect cookies, candy, and fudge. For her boys, childhood was magical!

Nancy made the better half of the perfect team with Jim. Through all their travels, Nancy made the most exquisite campsites. She had a talent for remaining spotless, even walking through mud in pristine white sneakers. She and Jim backpacked together in the North Carolina mountains. After their retirement, they spent 20 years traveling the American West, spending months in Borrego Springs, California and Ajo, Arizona, collecting friends along the way, leaving each place cleaner and brighter than before.

Nancy will be dearly missed by all. She is survived by her husband, James Thomas Madison, Sr.; cousin, Janet Nordman Hutchins in Raleigh, NC; son Charles Atlee Madison and his partner Joshua Benjamin Hinkle in Miami Beach, FL, Charlie's children, William Wright Madison and their partner Rin Ferraro, in Norman, OK and Conroe, TX; and Anna Hays Madison and her fiancé Curtis Murphy Haynes Mann in Lake George, NY; son Samuel Joshua Madison and his wife, Ashley Browning Madison, in Raleigh, NC, and his daughter Lucinda Pei Wen Madison in Mt. Pleasant, SC; and son James Thomas Madison, Jr. in Morganton, and his daughter, Stella James Madison in Oxford, MS.

Services are pending and will be announced once complete.

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In lieu of flowers, please donate with a paper check by mail to Burke Education Foundation, Inc. (the foundation is currently unable to take donations electronically through their website, so please direct your paper check via mail) in Memory of

Nancy Jane Craven Madison, PO Box 972, Morganton, NC, 28680, the best way to honor Nancy's legacy.

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

Tribute Wall

I have know Nancy mostly through her hussband Jim and his long years of adventures far and near with my partner Jim Thomas, joined by me , some of his kids and their friends. such memorable times !!! I know Nancy and Jim vacationed in southwest us and parts of coast of gulf of california. enjoyed it, met and made new friends and left the places cleaner than when they arried there . Yesssss !! I am glad Jim and Nancy have each other....forever.

–Rosanne K Ross



Prayers for comfort to you and your loving family.

–David & Margaret Hewitt



Aunt Nancy, thank you for the love you gave me. What a beautiful, caring, easy-going nature about you that I always admired. Distance could never change how much I loved you. Even though I wished we could have lived closer or seen each other more often over the years, the times we spent together will always be a cherished memory! Such sweet memories of when we were all much younger and would gather together at Mamie's house.. I always looked forward to seeing you and Jimmy and my cousins. Happy

times! You held a very special place in my heart! (My favorite aunt on the Craven side and also the coolest.) The camping trips were so much fun, too! Very special times out in nature together! Aunt Nancy, I will carry your spirit and our precious memories with me always!! Rest in peace and have a most glorious time with your mama and daddy and brother Billy and all your sisters in heaven above. I'll see you again one day!

–Amy Roessing



Mothers never truly leave us. You need but look in your heart and she will always be there. So very sorry for your grief.

–Zachery Davis

–AC Edwards

So sorry for your loss. What a lovely lady.

–Jim Belote

I never had the pleasure of meeting my dear friend Charlie Madison's mom Nancy and am sorry I did not. She surely seems to have been a wonderful human being, and she and her husband raised a wonderful son. Bless her lovely memory.

–Jo Manning

Dr. Madison and family, I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Mrs. Madison. What a wonderful tribute of her life. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Your pool lady, Betsy Johnson

–Betsy Johnson

Nancy was a lovely lady I had the pleasure to meet while working with her husband at J. Iverson Riddle Center. My sincere condolences to Jim and the boys. May you cherish the legacy of love she left behind in the coming days.

–Jane Simmons

–Gail Lawing