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Nancy Jean Smith Van Noppen

Feb. 4, 1929 - Aug. 29, 2022

Nancy Jean Smith Van Noppen died peacefully at her home in Morganton, North Carolina on Aug. 29, 2022. She was 93 years old. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, of 49 years, the late Donnell VanNoppen Jr. Born in Denver, Colorado on Feb. 4, 1929, Nancy was the only daughter of Nelle and H. Allen Smith, the best-selling author, humorist and screenwriter.

Nancy grew up in New York with a zest for life, a penchant for fun and the funny, and an abiding love of Frank Sinatra.

As a teenager in Mt. Kisco, NY, Nancy once snuck out of her parents' home and took the train into New York City to see "Ol' Blue Eyes" in concert. She was busted when Life Magazine snapped a photo of her outside the concert hall.

She attended Harcum College in Philadelphia and UNC-Chapel Hill where she met the great love of her life, Don, a UNC Navy ROTC graduate. They married in 1951.

Don and Nancy had four sons: Trip, Allen, Mark and David. "Raising four sons would cripple anyone," Nancy liked to joke. But it didn't slow her. It made her strong, fearless and perhaps even more organized than her Navy veteran husband.

Nancy was a well-regarded designer. She founded her design firm, Nancy's Fancy,

Inc. in the 1960's and added a retail business under the same name in downtown Morganton in the 1970's. She designed homes and businesses for discerning clients in North Carolina, Florida, Virginia, Mustique and elsewhere. With her constant collaborator, Don, she designed and built most of her residences, all distinctive for

their contemporary, open architecture. In later years, she split her time between homes in Morganton, North Carolina and Naples, Florida.

She loved her family, gardening, cooking, and entertaining with many friends of all ages. She cherished being a grandmother and great-grandmother. She was an active friend to young people, an apologist for teenagers (except her own) and revered by her nine grandchildren.

She is survived by four sons and daughters-in-law, Donnell Trip Van Noppen, III (Rivka Gordon); Allen VanNoppen (Jean); Mark Van Noppen (Julie); David Van Noppen (Barbara); eleven grandchildren (Eli, Aden, Nancy, Nell, Ellen, William, Sophie, Peter, Allen, Jr., Jean B., Charlotte) and two great-grandchildren (Levi and Forrest).

A private service will be held at a later date.

Memorials may be donated to the Friends of Burke Public Library; Amorem (formally Burke Hospice and Patient Care) and UNC-Blue Ridge Hospital.

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

Tribute Wall



—Nancy VanNoppen