



Dixie Lee Francis

June 27, 1936 - January 9, 2022

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The most loving, intelligent, and empathetic human to ever walk this planet went home to be with her Lord, her mom and dad, baby brothers, and baby sister January 9th. Dixie was born to Norman D. Neathamer and Jean F. (Rice) Neathamer in Grants Pass, Oregon. She was a fifth generation Oregonian. She was the second child of five children. Infant sister Sandra died, which prompted her parents to leave Grants Pass and move to San Francisco when she was 2. Her Aunt Helen was her mother's favorite sister (and her favorite aunt) living there. It was the time of WWII beginning, and her uncle was in the Navy. She always remembered San Francisco as a wonderful place for the next 7 years of her childhood. Living in a rooming house right next to Golden Gate Park, it being safe enough to play and roam. Her brother Norman was born while in San Francisco. Being the time of WWII, there were ration stamps for items: shoes, sugar, gas, etc. so these could go to the troops, and no one complained. We also had to black out lights in windows, and even on the Golden Gate Bridge. It was war years, and everyone stuck together. After 7 years in San Francisco, we moved back to my mother's hometown of Medford, Oregon. Grandparents E.R. and Sarah (Fifer) Rice and grandparents in Grants Pass, C. and Stella (Owings) Neathamer were all wonderful. Mom dearly remembered the stories from Grandma Stella (Owings), whose family has been in Maryland since the 1700's, and as part of their architectural legacy built the Sears Tower, Radio

City Music Hall, and other projects around the world. Mom loved the Rogue Valley (Medford, Ashland, Jacksonville, and the Rogue and Applegate rivers and Crater Lake).

She completed her primary schooling from 4th grade on in Medford, graduating in 1954 from Medford High School. Her memories were fond and of a great time with people dear to her there.

She moved to Corvallis and attended Oregon State College in the fall of 1954. She met and married Joe Francis in 1956, and they had three sons, Mark, Anthony, and Jon, who have made her life a true blessing. After leading Oregon State to 2 consecutive Rose Bowls (her sons recognize it was due to her stability, faithfulness, and love), Joe was drafted by the Green Bay Packers in 1958 and they spent four seasons there, again meeting great people and loving Wisconsin. Moving back to Corvallis, Joe coached with Tommy Prothro at OSU for 2 years before moving to Hawaii.

Dixie and Joe parted ways in 1968, and Dixie returned to Corvallis, was employed at the Alumni Office while she returned to school and obtained her degree in Elementary Education. She taught at Hoover and Adams Elementary Schools. Belonging to ADK-Education Sorority, she looked forward to seeing colleagues and friends each month. She also volunteered for the Historical Society (Archives) at the Children's Farm Home for over 20 years. She loved to read, container garden, and was involved in church activities. She had the best friends anyone could have, and loved her church, Corvallis Evangelical.

Her wishes are to have her ashes spread with her baby brother Mike, who she loved dearly, and at 4 historic cemeteries in southern Oregon to be with family. Pioneer Jacob Neathamer came from Missouri on the Oregon Trail.

Survivors include sons, nieces Natasha and Bridget, nephew Chris Neathamer, great niece Londyn Grace, 3 grandsons, Tim, Daniel, and Maika, 2 granddaughters Cheyenne and Makalani, and sister Norma.

Those preceding her in death are her parents Norman and Jean Neathamer, brothers Norman and Michael, and sister Sandra, grandparents C. and Stella

(Owings) Neathamer, E.R. and Sarah (Fifer) Rice, and many aunts and uncles.

Memorial Service pending. Contributions can be made to C.E.C., St. Judes, Childrens Farm Home Childrens programs, or a charity of your choice.

Arrangements by DeMoss-Durdan Funeral Home

541-754-6255

Tribute Wall

AV

“ I first met Dixie at Adam's Elementary when I taught English as a Second Language. My children also attended Adam's. I worked with a little Rwandan boy in her classroom. He wore his jacket zipped up to his chin all the time because our climate felt cold compared to his home in Africa. Dixie was so loving of him and all of her students. She celebrated their uniqueness. The children in her classroom were happy because Dixie exuded joy and kind acceptance. Dixie also had a wonderful sense of humor and the gift of making everyone feel comfortable around her. We could talk about anything, and most often, our conversations ended up with a lot of laughter. Yes, Dixie was also one stylish lady. How amazingly resilient she was in the face of physical difficulties. May we all face our challenges with Dixie's brand of humor. I always felt loved in her presence. I extend my heartfelt sympathy to her family. May wonderful memories sustain all of you. Dixie certainly made a positive difference in my life, and in all the lives around her. She was a blessing to this world.
Loving thoughts,
Angelyn Voss

Angelyn Voss - January 13, 2022 at 06:37 PM

JF

Thank you Angelyn

Jon Francis - January 18, 2022 at 04:59 PM

HJ

“*Dixie is the reason I started teaching in Corvallis School district! I was her long term sub in 2nd grade at Adams school the year she decided to retire. We met weekly to plan together that year. Her sense of humor, ability to face life’s changes with grace, and love for her family and friends provided all of us with a great role model.*

She was a teacher who was very connected with children. She sure taught me how to keep her students interested in the natural world around them that first year with the Bird unit she had begun.

Perfect at any gathering Dixie could be counted on for conversation and laughter. I watched her connect with strangers and put them at ease.

I always looked forward to seeing her (stylishly dressed) at our ADK meetings. She will be missed. May her memory remind us how to smile through life’s changes and challenges. Duane and I send our condolences to her family. Heather Jager

Heather Jager - January 13, 2022 at 02:14 PM

JF

Thank you Heather

Jon Francis - January 18, 2022 at 04:59 PM

EW

“ I first met Dixie when I subbed for her at Hoover School—40 years ago! As luck would have it, we both ended up at Adam’s School teaching right next to each other. When Dixie invited me to her home, I was so impressed with her decorating style. She was always impeccably dressed, but the rooms in her home could easily have been found in top end decorating magazines. She had the knack to place each beloved item in exactly the right spot. Dixie was generous with her time and gift giving. She often found items at estate sales that she knew I would love and present them to me as birthday gifts. I will forever treasure those with loving thoughts.

After Dixie retired, she volunteered in my classroom every Tuesday for eight years! Unfailingly, she always stopped at the coffee shop on the way to school to bring me a latte. Knowing she was coming made Tuesday’s my favorite day!

Dixie had a great sense of humor and we shared a lot of laughs, especially over the inevitable humorous things that young students say and do!

Dixie was dedicated to her family, especially her three sons. Her memory will live on in their hearts and shared experience of their mom.

Dixie faced health challenges with determined grit and resilience. She beat the odds again and again. She was a true marvel!

With my condolences and appreciation for having known her,
Eneke Warnke

Eneke Warnke - January 13, 2022 at 10:58 AM

JF

Thank you very much, Eneke

Jon Francis - January 18, 2022 at 04:58 PM