



Jane Beneke Zuidema

May 5, 1945 - May 19, 2026

Jane Beneke Zuidema of Alexandria, VA died on May 19, 2026 following a brief illness. The irises, peonies, and Virginia sweetspire she planted in her yard were in full bloom.

Jane was a gardener, a crafter, a teacher, a volunteer, a friend, sister, wife, and mother - but never the fussy kind. She found humor in everyday life, even in the darker moments, and appreciated people who did the same.

Born on May 5, 1945 in Dallas, TX, to Donald and Alice (Stover) Beneke, Jane was the oldest of three siblings. She graduated from Valparaiso University in Indiana where she met her husband, Malcolm Zuidema. Jane and Mac were married in 1967 and they welcomed daughters Leslie and Kristen a few years later.

They made their home in Alexandria, VA and lived in the same house for 50 years.

For 24 years, Jane taught elementary school in Fairfax County, VA. She especially loved teaching English language learners at Bren Mar Park Elementary, where her students fondly called her Mrs. Z. She formed lasting friendships with her colleagues, who knew if they needed an item for a special project, costume, or bulletin board, Jane would be able to find it in her

basement.

Jane was an active member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Springfield, VA for close to 50 years. She served as an usher, coordinated Vacation Bible School, and volunteered with Food for Others. Most recently, she attended Thursday morning Bible Study (which she affectionately called BS) and the Tuesday Lunch Bunch (especially on days they served cake). She regularly organized Thrivent Action Grants to support food and clothing drives through the church.

Jane loved reading, crossword puzzles, Saturday morning NPR, frozen margaritas, a good bargain, and chocolate in any form. She reduced, reused, and recycled before it was a thing. She spent hours on her back patio, watching wrens nest in her bird houses and cursing the squirrels for digging up her annuals.

Jane also loved people. Magnets on her refrigerator held photos of her students. She cultivated lifelong friendships with her neighbors in Bren Mar Park. She visited her parents, siblings, and their families in Michigan during summer breaks. She enjoyed get-aways with family and friends at the Beaver Pond in Rappahannock County, Capon Springs in West Virginia, and the beaches of Delaware, Maryland, and North Carolina. Jane joked with her sons-in-law and kept a running tally of chores they completed for her. (They are probably tied.) She made potato rolls with her grandchildren and introduced them to *The Young and the Restless*. She posted her Wordle scores to the family group chat daily. She was immensely proud of her daughters.

Jane was preceded in death by her parents Alice and Don, her husband Mac, and Aunt Jo. She is loved and missed by her daughters Kristen Zuidema and Leslie Winesett, sons-in-law Matt Woll and Andy Winesett, grandchildren Caton Woll and Olivia and Emily Winesett, siblings Ann Dieleman (Peter) and

Jim Beneke (Kathy), the Turnons, and many other dear friends and family members.

A memorial service will be held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Springfield, VA later this summer; arrangements will be posted here.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to ECHO (Ecumenical Community Helping Others), www.echo-inc.org, or St. Mark's Lutheran Church, www.stmarks-elca.org.

Tribute Wall

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“ *This is hard to believe. Jane (Mrs. Z. to me) has been such a dear friend to me for more than 35 years. I always loved to "pop in" to have a visit and always finding her working on one of her latest projects (actually, it was never just one - let's kindly call it controlled chaos). She could turn anything into something. I will miss her wit, kindness, advice, sense of humor and so much more.*

Angela Hollingsworth - May 24 at 08:01 PM