



## Ann Larkin Sims Dudley

December 6, 1941 - March 24, 2024

Larkin is survived by her daughter, Drenan Dudley; granddaughter, Abigail Dudley and Abigail's mother, Deborah Dudley; and many nieces and nephews and their families. She is preceded in death by her husband, Charles "Jack" Dudley; their son, Charles "Chris" Dudley; her parents; and beloved cousins.

Larkin, often described as "small but mighty" at an ultimate height of 5'2", graduated from the University of Georgia with a bachelor's and a master's degree and from Virginia Tech with a PhD. She met the love of her life, Jack, while at the University of Georgia when they teamed up to play a prank on a professor who often bummed his cigarettes from students. After joining forces in jokes, Jack and Larkin married and enjoyed 54 years of marriage steeped in shared respect for each other, a love of learning, and traveling at every opportunity.

Shortly after marriage, and after a stint living in Oregon and then Georgia again, Larkin moved with her husband and two young children to Blacksburg, Virginia. Following in her own mother's footsteps, Larkin decided earning an additional degree while raising a family was an exhilarating challenge and attended many youth soccer games and horseback riding shows while she earned her PhD in the early 1990s from Virginia Tech. While at Tech, she served as professor in the Center for Public Administration and Policy in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies and wrote more than 40

publications and directed numerous sponsored research projects. She also served on the editorial board of the International Journal of Organizational Theory and Behavior; and she served in leadership positions for the Southeastern Conference on Public Administration, the American Society for Public Administration, and the National Association of Schools of Public Administration and Affairs. Larkin excelled in topics related to how governments - and particularly the United States government - work and she contributed significantly to research on citizen participation, governance, and organizational challenge.

Larkin was also instrumental in the creation and implementation of the master's of public administration degree program at Virginia Tech – so much so her colleagues referred to her as the “ethos of the program”. She chaired the program in Public Administration and Policy and the School of Public and International Affairs' promotion and tenure committee. She also served numerous positions in the Phi Beta Kappa society. After retirement, Larkin was conferred the "professor emerita" title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors following a recommendation by the Virginia Tech President.

While serious study interested her, Larkin was delighted by engaging and working with students on everything from their academics to their dreams and life goals. If a student stopped by her office, it was not an interruption... it was the purpose of her work! High expectations and tough grading coupled with southern graces earned her a reputation for being tough but fair – in the kindest of ways - and students clamored to have her as an advisor. She often engaged other professors to get involved in student needs as well and on occasion students were referred to Larkin's husband, Jack, also a professor. No pranks on the students were ever discovered.

With former students placed in government positions at all levels all over the country, Larkin enjoyed a busy retired life for well over a decade. She loved an

adventure as much as she hated the cold and took many trips to mostly warm places. As an avid bridge player, book reader, joke teller, and learner, her many circles of friends basked in her warmth and caring. Her smile and laugh uplifted many. Her quiet faith knew no bounds. A typical day right up to the end of her life was going for a swim, playing bridge, mailing one of her frequently sent cards to a family member or friend, contributing to a discussion at a lecture, and maybe topping it off by hanging out at a potluck with the Aging Solos or attending the regular meeting of her book club ironically named the Shrinking Violets (of which there are none).

Larkin often reflected on her happy early childhood days in both Virginia and South Carolina. In the Charlottesville area, she spent time with cousins and learned Sims traditions including the one of having oyster stew for breakfast on Christmas morning which her own family either endured or relished each year. When her father's job took the young family to the upstate of South Carolina, she quickly took to the town of Gaffney, begged her parents to let her work at a peach stand, and made lifelong friends with a group of gals referred to as "the Herd". However, her own favorite moniker "Sharkey" came when she was thrilled to become a grandmother to Abby.

For friends of the family and former students in the Washington, D.C. area there will be a celebration of life gathering at Samuel Beckett's Irish Gastro Pub, 2800 S. Randolph Street #110, Arlington, VA, on Wednesday, April 3, 2024 from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

A funeral will be held at Christ Episcopal Church, 120 Church Street, NE, Blacksburg, VA at 1 p.m., Saturday, April 6, 2024, and a reception will follow after the service in the parish hall.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of the many organizations

Larkin so dearly loved.

- Valley Interfaith Child Care Center DONATIONS VICCC  
([valleyinterfaithchildcarecenter.org](http://valleyinterfaithchildcarecenter.org))
- Habitat for Humanity Online Donation - Habitat for Humanity International (In honor of Larkin Dudley, cards may be sent to P.O. Box 6060 Arlington, VA 22206)
- Christ Episcopal Church P.O. Box 164 Blacksburg VA 24063

Cards and remembrances can be received at Drenan Dudley P.O. Box 6060 Arlington, VA 22206 or by email at [drenanedudley@gmail.com](mailto:drenanedudley@gmail.com).

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

APR 3. 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM (ET)

Samuel Beckett's Irish Gastro Pub  
2800 S. Randolph Street #110  
Arlington, VA 22206

## Funeral

APR 6. 1:00 PM (ET)

Christ Episcopal Church  
120 Church Street NE  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

# Tribute Wall



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Ann Larkin Sims Dudley.*



April 05, 2024 at 10:46 AM



“ *love, the Bond Girls (CJS family) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ann Larkin Sims Dudley.*

**love, the Bond Girls (CJS family)** - April 05, 2024 at 10:46 AM



“ *Larkin welcomed me when I arrived as a junior professor in Blacksburg. She taught how to teach, and how to mentor, and she remains a guiding light for me to this day. Her infectious love of and appreciation for public service shaped my path, and I think of her often. I am pleased to see that the VT award for an outstanding MPA (master's) paper is given in her name as the Dudley award.*

**Patrick Roberts** - April 03, 2024 at 11:13 PM



“ *Charles H. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ann Larkin Sims Dudley.*

**Charles H.** - April 03, 2024 at 08:52 AM

GM

“ Larkin’s spirit will endure. She anchored the CPAP community with her caring way and her ability to connect with young and old. Rest in peace.

Gary Marshall - April 01, 2024 at 03:21 PM

OD

“ Office of the National Cyber Director purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Ann Larkin Sims Dudley.



Office of the National Cyber Director - April 01, 2024 at 10:50 AM

OD

“ Office of the National Cyber Director planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ann Larkin Sims Dudley.

Office of the National Cyber Director - April 01, 2024 at 10:50 AM

DG

“ Drenan, we were deeply saddened to learn of your mother's passing and remain with you during this difficult time. Her smile warms my heart as she radiates love, joy, and kindness. The loss of a mother lasts a lifetime -- that said, try to focus on the love she gave you and the wonderful memories you shared. May those joyful memories bring you peace and comfort. Your friend and colleague, Deb Grays

Deborah Grays - April 01, 2024 at 10:43 AM

SM

“ *"The measure of a life is not what that life accomplishes but rather ... the impact that life has on others." - Jackie Robinson.*  
*I was blessed to have both Dr.s Dudley (Jack and Larkin) as advisors in my academic career, and their legacy lives on in public servants nationwide. A current colleague who is also a CPAP grad once looked at a presentation and remarked to me, "Larkin would not approve" and we both had a fond laugh. She was one of a kind.*  
*Sheila Stogdale Minor*

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**Sheila Minor** - March 28, 2024 at 04:44 PM

DE

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



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**Dorothy Lemme Egger** - March 28, 2024 at 10:43 AM

LB

“ *Drenan and family, my heart breaks for your loss, but fills back up with overwhelming joy when I reflect on the legacy and impact of her life on so many of us. Let the arms of her widespread community hold you tightly. Peace in the days ahead.*

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**Lynn Brammer** - March 28, 2024 at 09:20 AM

CE

“ Drenan, I am very sorry to hear about the passing of Larkin. She was a beautiful soul inside and out. She always had a smile on her face. She loved her family deeply. May God be with you and family members during this difficult time. May God touch your broken heart a little each day.

Charlotte Epperley - March 28, 2024 at 03:43 AM

DK

“ Always enjoyed her calm thoughtful presence in academia. A great mind melded with a deep soul. May she rest in peace.

Dr. Larry Keller - March 28, 2024 at 12:12 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Mary Johnson - March 27, 2024 at 05:05 PM



Larkin seemed to enjoy being part of this little "gang."

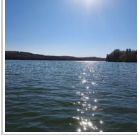
Mary Johnson - March 27, 2024 at 05:06 PM

CH

“ Our deepest sympathy, Larkin was close to us all. What a pleasure it was to see and be with her during the wedding. Jane, Charlie and Carol



Charles Hogan - March 27, 2024 at 04:57 PM



“ My deepest condolences to family and friends of Larkin. I was her student and graduate assistant at CPAP, Virginia Tech in 2002-2005. I am forever grateful for all of Larkin's dedicated teaching, mentorship, and friendship. She has always been so extremely kind to me, and supported not only professionally and academically but personally in a very special way. She was extremely charismatic, genuine, caring, approachable, and deeply dedicated to her profession and people around her. We laughed and cried in her office and classes. Thank you, dear Larkin! I will always remember you in a very special way. Natalia Goldin (Shakirova)

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**Natalia Goldin** - March 27, 2024 at 04:46 PM

JB

“ I will forever be grateful for the chance she took on this Southwest Virginia kid who probably wasn't deserving of it. I have made the most of that opportunity. So many great conversations in the Thomas Conner House that will always be cherished. - Justin Brooks MPA 2002

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**Justin Brooks** - March 27, 2024 at 03:49 PM

KI

“ 1 file added to the album Larkin Legacy



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**Kim** - March 27, 2024 at 03:38 PM

JP

“Drenan, so very sorry for the loss of your mom, I always enjoyed hanging out at the Dudley house and taking our adventures in the MG IN the garage. Lot of hugs to you.

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**Julie Parson** - March 27, 2024 at 02:59 PM

DW

*I am overwhelmed with sadness at this news. I've spent countless hours with Larkin on LWV projects and more. I am so sorry for your loss and the loss to all who knew her. Wayne Dempsey Worner*

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**Dempsey Worner** - March 27, 2024 at 04:19 PM