



Mary Jane Henika

March 15, 1941 - January 11, 2025

Mary Jane Henika, beloved wife, devoted mother, and constant comedian passed away quietly with family at her side on Saturday, January 11 in hospice care at Heritage Hall in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Mary Jane was born on March 15, 1941, in Newport News where her father, Professor Andrew Murphy was teaching before World War Two. During the war years Mary Jane and her mother Mary Eleanor Murphy were able to join Lieutenant Andrew Murphy at the Army Air Corps training base at Blytheville, Arkansas where he was an ordinance officer and preflight instructor for B25 Mitchell bomber crews. Mary Jane had fond memories of living on the base, including being lulled to sleep by the thrumming sound of synchronized radial engines overhead during night training flights, always returning to the barracks with the purple roof after playing on the street with the other officer's kids and being treated with great respect and love on the base and on train trips by lonely soldiers and airman during the war.

After the war, Mary Jane's family made the transition from the military to the academic life on campuses in Georgia, South Carolina and finally Salem, Virginia where her dad was a beloved Chemistry Professor at Roanoke College for more than 20 years. Growing up in Salem, Mary Jane attended the original North Cross School for four years, then Broad Street Elementary and Andrew Lewis High School where she graduated in 1959. Mary Jane left

Salem in 1959 to attend Madison College (James Madison University) where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and social work in 1963. That fall she began teaching in special education in the Roanoke area but returned to Madison for the summer term of 1964 for additional course work. That summer she met her husband William (Bill) Henika on a Uva outing club /cave club beginner spelunking trip to Crossroads Cave and Goshen Pass in the Lexington area.

Mary Jane was a social worker at the Fauquier County Welfare Department in Warrenton while Bill finished his bachelor's degree in Charlottesville. They were married in the Salem Presbyterian Church in 1965 and continued a 60 year romantic adventure, enjoying hiking and camping and paddling trips to exciting locations proximate to base Warrenton, Bethlehem, PA, Charlottesville, Dallas and for the last forty years Blacksburg. While Bill was off surveying Southwest Virginia for the Geologic Survey office at VT, Mary Jane worked at the FNBC in Blacksburg, always greeting banking customers with a smile and a joke or two as a teller and then the vault cashier.

Mary Jane is survived by her husband Bill Henika, Daughter Dorothy Elizabeth Henika, Son Robert Henika (Jenny), granddaughters Michelle (Jose) and Morgan, grandson Matthew and great granddaughter Aliana. The family would like to thank the ICU and Palliative care team at Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Carilion Hospice Care Nurses, the nursing care team at Heritage Hall and the staff and students at the Virginia Tech Engagement Center for Creative Ageing for loving care and creative stimulation which has bound the family to the community for the last several years. The support of the BPC Congregation and pastors Sarah and Emily ensured that Mary Jane's latest journey was as full of love and respect as those long train rides and barracks life during the war that were her treasured memories. A memorial celebration of Mary Jane's life is planned for March 15, 2025, at 2:00 pm, at the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 15. 2:00 PM (ET)

Blacksburg Presbyterian Church
701 Church Street SE
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Tribute Wall

BH

“ Dear Bill, Beth, Rob and Jennifer: I wish we could all be with you to share stories and the good times we’ve shared over these many years. Those, along with some sad times as well. Know we love you all. Betty

Betty Henika - March 12, 2025 at 11:19 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Mary Jane Henika.



March 12, 2025 at 11:13 AM

MM

“ Although I've been gone from Blacksburg a long time, I have fond memories of Bill & Mary Jane from my time at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church. I send love to Bill and the family in this time of loss.

Marge Murray
Iowa City

Marge Murray - February 09, 2025 at 08:28 PM

KA

“ I am the biker from the singing group and albeit shortly, I appreciated the sharp tongue and sense of humor. All my comforting hugs to Bill to loose such a companion. Kind regards
Karine

Karine - January 22, 2025 at 08:02 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



McCoy Funeral Home Inc - January 22, 2025 at 10:12 AM