



Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead

August 28, 2018

Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead, age 74, died on August 28, 2018 in Chestertown, MD. Cindy was the daughter of John O. and Mary Pauline Stanton McCoy.

She is survived by William B. Bankhead II, her husband of 55 years; her children, Mary Eugenia Bankhead of Chestertown, Tallulah B. Lloyd of RI, and William B. Bankhead, III of Worton, MD; her son-in-law, Philip Lloyd; and daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Bankhead. Cindy was a proud and loving grandmother to William B Bankhead IV and Remi B. Lloyd whose lives have been uncommonly blessed for having known her.

Cindy is preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Owen McCoy; an infant son, Henry; her beloved aunt, Nancy; her cousin, Sissy; and a motley crew of uncles whose influence can be felt joyfully reverberating through generations. Hopefully, they are planning a welcome party.

Cindy grew up at Burn Brae Hospital, the family home in Primos, PA. She was surrounded by a cast of characters, including parents, a brother, cousins, uncles, aunts, and hospital patients (who seemed more like distant family members from her familiar and vivid accounts). These characters would go on to fuel a lifetime of story telling, stories that left listeners delighted or aghast... and

often left her brother to exclaim, in a hearty booming voice, “THAT’S NOT HOW IT HAPPENED.”

Cindy’s mother could be described as hard as nails in comparison to her soft sided sister, Aunt Nancy. She marched through a life of necessity and completed any task that needed doing with unadorned efficiency. Taring the roof, repairing a leaky toilet, feeding the chickens....plucking the chickens.

Knowing their mother handed over a bucket of black paint to her two very young children, Cindy and Owen, and said “Have at it,” you can understand how these two people grew up to be the creative, unique individuals they were — unfettered by all the norms, standards, limits, and structure in which we common folk become sadly encumbered. Not only did their mother allow it, but she left the blackened window panes (perhaps that room had been too bright anyway) and permanent, inky black foot and handprints to festoon the woodwork, as reminder for all and forever, of their adventure, their glee, possibly their guilt - until

Burn Brae was no longer. A lesson in consequence, perhaps? It became more of a daily reminder of lives fully lived. When Cindy was allowed to play in a pool of tar, to then endure it’s rather uncomfortable removal — she learned a valuable lesson in freedom of choice and consequences, and that tar stinks.

Yes, Cindy spent a youth full of unusual freedoms.

- Going to a school where you could actually bring your horse, race through fields and jump hedges to chase skunks with dubious success since— they caught one! Then, instead of tomato juice, bathing in Aunt Mary’s perfume — the name of which, Cindy could still recall.

- As a preteen, intentionally pulling off her braces with Sugar Daddy’s so she could get a day off from school — as she took the train (alone) in to Philadelphia to get them repaired. School v Dentist — Well, we all have our priorities.

- Summers surrounded by another motley crew, this one of cousins both older and younger than Cindy. Cindy tells of rotten tomato fights, with kids hurling mushy fruit at each other. Now, Cindy and Owen's mother could have said something about the waste of food. Then again, those tomatoes really had seen better days, unlike the threadbare towels. She let the play go on, maybe because she was busy getting a wold of jobs done, but just maybe because she saw the value of growing up free from ultimately unnecessary constraints. Unbreakable bonds formed in those young years, bonds that exist today. As the scale of her life diminished only in the last few years, Cindy cherished the "Cousin's Lunches," half for the fun and family, half for the food!

The often retold stories blend together — leaving some unclear as to which generation created those memories at Burn Brae. Sending a wheelchair bound Cindy (in hip high leg casts) careening down the steep driveway, not with a scream but with, shrieks of delight. Was it safe? NO. Was it fun? YES.

Many

years later, Owen watched his young niece crash her big wheel on that same steep driveway. There are blurry visions of Owen, running to the rescue, not over worried, not mad, upset or freaking out. He had had a lifetime of good training in taking everything in a cool stride. When you can be blasé about Uncles

shooting each other with BB guns, (Didn't I hear someone lost a tooth that way?) ehh , watching your little niece in a little high speed tumble off a red plastic big wheel is no biggie. Happenstance or well planned - a childhood of freedoms and family created this unique group of spirited relatives — fueling the

story bank for a lifetime of Cindy's retelling — her rendition at least, because some may boom "That's not how it happened."

After graduating from the Gunston School in Centreville, MD, Cindy started

nursing school at Lasell, then promptly decided to marry Billy Bankhead. While they raised their family on a farm in Kent County, Cindy kept a menagerie of farm animals, dogs, cats, and kids. At one point, when the children were young, Cindy went to an auction to buy a saddle but came home with three sheep instead. This went on to form the foundation of an award winning sheep and wool business at Springfield Farms in Rock Hall, MD.

Only after their youngest child graduated from college did Cindy finally earn her RN degree from nursing school, more than 30 years after she began that particularly circuitous journey. Cindy's life validates the saying, "Life's what happens when you're busy making other plans."

Cindy crossed her final finish line, having completed her personal marathon by sheer force of will. She may have dashed or danced or ambled. She may have been singing an offbeat song on beat, reciting poetry committed to memory long ago or devising a witty retort to life. Most likely she was chattering away, keeping the moment light and silly, her way of putting people at ease in trying times. To all of the family and friends who knew Cindy, her kindness, her straightforward, unfiltered manner, her tenacious spirit, her unwavering will to live, her quirky humor, her love of music, poetry and people, her telling (and retelling)(and embellishing) old stories, please know how very blessed she felt to have known and loved you all.

A service will be held at St. Paul's Church on September 29, at 11am, with a reception to follow.

Previous Events

Service

SEP **29**. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Kent
7760 Sandy Bottom Road
Chestertown, MD

Tribute Wall



“ *Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *Cindy and I started together in Nursing School at Lasell College . I remember her so very well. She was so much fun. I remember her stories about swimming in the nude with her Aunt Talluha. She also gave me a watch that I had for many years.*

At the time at school she cringed at the sight of what we encountered at the Boston Brigham Hospital. I am so glad to learn that she went back to nursing.

Susan Miller-Havens - March 30, 2020 at 06:11 PM



“ *Marie Usilton lit a candle in memory of Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead*



Marie Usilton - September 10, 2018 at 07:08 AM

SJ

“ *Sandy Joiner lit a candle in memory of
Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead*



Sandy Joiner - September 09, 2018 at 05:12 PM

SJ

I always enjoyed chatting with Cindy, she was a great gal and I

Sandy Joiner - September 09, 2018 at 05:13 PM

PS

“ To All The McCoy’s Bankheads:

Pete took me to Burn Brae in 1971 right before our wedding in early June. It was on Oak Lane, right next to the old Penn Fruit supermarket on the corner of Oak Lane & Baltimore Pike (now the Burlington Coat Factory store).....Look what I found on the internet.....you’ve seen it.....”Let’s go back 150 years to that same corner and visit a lush green countryside and a grand mansion that served as an escape for the elite. Did I mention it was an asylum? This was the location for The Burn Brae Sanitarium. The countryside and clean air were sought after remedies from a congested city full of crazy. Burn Brae wasn’t your normal insane institution, Dr. Robert A. Given who founded the asylum in 1859 wanted to do things a little different.”.....and so on (Sorry.....no footnote!!!).

That was my introduction to Aunt Polly, Uncle John, Genie, Aunt Nancy, and Owen. That visit, less than a week before our wedding, was notable for my leaving the “sacred” Stanton Family engagement ring Pete had given me by the pool.....only to have it returned by a very digusted Aunt Polly a few days later in the mail. The beginning of “toutuous teasing” inflicted on me by the McCoy/Stanton Clan!!! You know who you are. On that one night we slept over at Burn Brae, we had separate bedrooms, of course, with Pete sneaking in my room to give me a chaste good night kiss. I did not meet Cindy and Billy until my Wedding June 19th, 1971.

I thought Cindy and Billy were bigger than life and remember being very impressed by their good looks and Cindy’s wit and zest for life. Cindy, Pete loves you..... I thank you for welcoming me, and our girls so warmly into the family. Pete and I wish you to have eternal life and have it abundantly. Save a spot for us!!!

Peter and Barbara Stanton - September 09, 2018 at 04:47 PM

SM

“ Susan And Lee McGinnis lit a candle in memory of Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead



Susan and Lee McGinnis - September 07, 2018 at 06:51 PM

TJ

“ Tom And Nancy Lee Jewell lit a candle in memory of Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead



Tom and Nancy Lee Jewell - September 06, 2018 at 07:18 PM

DE

“ Donna Hubbard Edwards lit a candle in memory of Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead



Donna Hubbard Edwards - September 06, 2018 at 05:31 PM

DE

“ Donna Hubbard Edwards lit a candle in memory of Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead



Donna Hubbard Edwards - September 06, 2018 at 04:34 PM

CR

“ Cindy was one of a kind - a joyful and down-to-earth girl. I bought a sheep fleece from her once ("Susan" was the ewe it came from). Wish I had kept up with her these past 35 years - but occasionally we did on Facebook. When God made Cindy, he broke the mold so no one else could be anywhere NEAR like her! A special person - who will be missed, I'm sure, by many. Great sympathy to the family...

Cathy Middleton Raphael

Cathy Middleton Raphael - September 05, 2018 at 07:56 AM

CB

“ Cheryl Butler & Brendon lit a candle in memory of Celinda Jane McCoy Bankhead



Cheryl Butler & Brendon - September 05, 2018 at 07:40 AM