



## Frances Anne Phelps

July 29, 1945 - July 18, 2023

Fran, lovingly known as “FiFi”, by her nieces and nephews, was the second oldest of four daughters born to Howard and Avice Phelps in Jacksonville, FL. Attending Alfred I. duPont School, she was a proud member of marching and concert bands and was awarded many 1st placements in district and state band contests. Playing the clarinet, oboe and English horn, she achieved first chair oboe, a significant triumph and was even invited to march in Gimbals and Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade in NYC!

After graduation, she earned an A.A. degree from Lake City Jr. College, where she was voted class president and Miss Lake City Jr. College, and then on to complete her B.A. degree in Art Education from FSU, where she was a member of the Marching Chiefs.

Her next adventure would be teaching art in elementary schools in Jacksonville for several years before continuing her education at Texas A&M to earn her Masters Degree in Art History. After graduation she returned to Jacksonville to start a career at the Museum of Art, spending most of her time at the Cummer Museum.

Throughout her life she conducted special seminars for teachers, special events for students and the public, and participated in exhibits, including the King Tut traveling exhibit. Excelling herself, in her own art, she produced

many pieces; including paintings on canvas, pottery, clothing, and photographs, just a few of the extensive creative and artistic endeavors she contributed. She also was a part of the development of art education curriculum for the State of Florida, where in 1987 was recognized as Museum Education Art Educator of the Year for “Excellence and outstanding contributions for services rendered in promoting, stimulating and furthering Art Education in the State of Florida.” After the death of her beloved father in 1985, she moved in to accompany her Mom, and later, became her sole caregiver, until her death in 2016 at the age of 95.

Fran’s love of art and culture was also expressed through travels that she was also able to share with her family. Notably, traveling to China and Europe through art education programs at Florida International University (Miami). FiFi shared a special trip to France with her niece, who was studying art history in school, where they painted at Monet’s garden and Notre Dame. Several cruises, including Alaska, Russia, and parts of Europe with her Mom; a cross country road trip to Montana, to visit her youngest sister and nephew and visit Yellowstone; as well as, a trip to Massachusetts with her oldest sister, to see her nephew graduate from M.I.T., were especially memorable.

Her creativity dominated her persona and was seen in every element of her life - from the furniture and décor inside her home, the goodies that came fresh from the kitchen (she was the cookie lady!), her love of architecture and gardening, to her generosity she bestowed upon her loved ones through thoughtful gifts and fun projects. She was an independent woman, strong and fierce in everything she did, making her own way in life and achieving a great many personal goals, but always making time to take care of others.

Fran was preceded in death by her parents; and two sisters, Murl Cruce and Vonnie Davis. She was survived by her sister, Sharon Hobbs (Roger); three nephews, John Tolli, Jeremy Hobbs, and Matt Davis (Alayne); and two nieces,

Susan Morgan (Daryl) and Kelley Hobbs (Joseph), along with six grand-nephews and one grand-niece.

Family will gather at Mandarin Cemetery, where the majority of her ashes will remain alongside her parents. The remaining ashes will be scattered by surviving family at various travel destinations around the world as an homage to her love of travel, culture, and new experiences.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com)) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

# Tribute Wall

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“ Fifi was a very nice lady. I lived talking with her when she visited her sister, Sharon, or when we visited Jacksonville. I loved learning to cook from her and talk about art, especially Egyptian art. She will be missed. Rest now, Fifi.

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**Angie H** - August 10, 2023 at 08:13 PM