



Mignon Upchurch Beranek

November 29, 1948 - November 29, 2019

On Friday, November 29, 2019 Mignon Upchurch “Dee” Beranek died peacefully surrounded by her family following a brief illness. Dee, born in Walnut Creek, California on November 29, 1948, was the eldest daughter of The Honorable Frank D. Upchurch, Jr. and Mignon T. “Tis” Upchurch. Early in her life, the family moved from California to Florida and, eventually, to St. Augustine, where Dee was raised.

Dee received her Bachelor’s degree from Sophie Newcomb College at Tulane University and spent several years working with youth as the principal of a special education center in Savannah, Georgia. In 1983 she graduated from Mercer Law School and moved to Tallahassee, Florida where she began an entirely new career.

From 1983 to 2002, Dee worked at the Supreme Court of Florida, first directing judicial education and then serving in the dual role of deputy state courts administrator and general counsel for the Florida State Courts System. She was a visionary leader, especially in the advancement of adult professional development and learning and was the principal architect of modern judicial branch education in Florida. Under Dee’s leadership, Florida’s judicial education program was recognized as one of the best in the nation and served as a model for other state courts.

Dee was known for her expertise in adult education, needs assessment, evaluation, and curriculum development. She served as a consultant and as faculty to both national and international judicial education programs. She was a member of the National Judicial College's Board of Trustees and served several terms as the Southeastern Regional Director of the National Association of State Judicial Educators. She also served the larger legal community as a member of The Florida Bar Rules of Judicial Administration Committee, the Florida Supreme Court Gender Bias Study Implementation Commission, the Florida Supreme Court Commission on Fairness, and the Second Judicial Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission.

In retirement, her passion for education, fairness, and reform took the shape of tutoring and mentoring youth and working with 10,000 Villages, the League of Women Voters, and other local organizations, as well as the study of her faith. She continued to tend the friendships from all seasons of her life and delighted in time with her family. She was constantly reimagining her gardens in Tallahassee and in Highlands, North Carolina and always ready for a new adventure. Dee's family and friends cherish their memories of her as a spirited conversation partner, a curious and reflective learner, a welcoming host, and a devoted, loving presence in their lives.

Dee is survived by her husband of 28 years, John R. Beranek, and her daughter, Mignon L. "Sarah" Brockenbrough, and husband, William, of Roseland, Virginia. She is also survived by her brother, Frank D. Upchurch III, of St. Augustine, Florida; her sister, Robin Upchurch Allen, and husband, Stephen, of Savannah, Georgia; and her brother, Kramer T. Upchurch, and wife, Sandra, of St. Augustine, Florida, along with six nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will take place at St. John's Episcopal Church at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, December 7, 2019. In lieu of flowers, donations in Dee's memory may be made to Episcopal Relief and Development, League of

Women Voters, or the International Rescue Committee.

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

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 7. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. John's Episcopal Church
211 North Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Tribute Wall

C(

“ Carol & Roger Cox (Rodriguez) purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mignon Upchurch Beranek.



Carol & Roger Cox (Rodriguez) - December 07, 2019 at 03:49 PM

CR

“ Aunt Dee to me was always a life force in herself. When I talked to her I would feel her exuding confidence & compassion. She was a role model & always full of adventure. She truly is one of the few people I know that really lived life to it's fullest. When ever we visited from out of town Aunt Dee was the consummate hostess and more interested in how I was doing than herself. She made an indelible impact on my life over the life year with her strength, clear mindedness and caring for my personal and family well being. And for that I will be ever grateful. Today we are filled with much love for Dee and her family and much sorrow that she has left us.
Carol & Roger Cox (Rodriguez)

Carol Rodriguez - December 07, 2019 at 03:05 PM

CR

“ Carol Rodriguez lit a candle in memory of Mignon Upchurch Beranek



Carol Rodriguez - December 07, 2019 at 02:30 PM

PH

“ Florida's judicial branch has lost one of its greatest champions. It was a joy to work alongside Dee for so many years. She was a true professional.

Paul Hill

Paul Hill - December 03, 2019 at 09:52 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Mignon Upchurch Beranek.



December 02, 2019 at 03:26 PM

CW

“ Dee made many lasting contributions to Florida's courts, and in particular to judges. She built and maintained a superior judicial education system which was vital to the competent performance of Florida's judges at every level of our Court system. In addition to judicial education Dee was important in the successful administration of our office of judicial administration, But, most of all she was a wonderful colleague and friend.

Charley Wells

Charley Wells - December 02, 2019 at 02:57 PM

NS

“ I will always remember the significant impact Dee had on judicial branch education, especially as it related to "other court personnel", in addition to judges. Dee wrote an outstanding report on Florida's Court Personnel that is still referred to the "Beranek Report." Without her devotion, passion for her work, and her commitment to the judicial branch, all of us would not realize the strides that the State Courts System has made to improve the quality of justice.

*Nick Sudzina
Trial Court Administrator
Tenth Judicial Circuit*

Nick Sudzina - December 02, 2019 at 02:13 PM