



Joanna Antoinette Nugent

April 23, 1937 - March 22, 2024

Joanna Antionette Arena Nugent was born in Brawley, California on April 23, 1937 and left her earthly body on March 22, 2024 at the age of 86. "Little Toni" as she was known in Brawley was born to Anthony and Lillian Arena. Seven years later Joanna became big sister to Sharon and the sisterly adventures began. "Sisters, sisters, there were never such devoted sisters..."

After the Arena Family relocated to Visalia in 1950, Mom graduated from high school in 1954, which was the last graduating class from Visalia Senior High School. She attended College of the Sequoias, from 1954 through 1956. While at COS Mom won the Miss Visalia Beauty Pageant and then competed in the Miss Tulare County Beauty Pageant. During her time at COS, she also started working as a medical assistant, working her way from file clerk to office manager.

In 1958 Mom made a phone call that would change her life. She called into a radio show to request the song Rebel Rouser by Duane Eddy. Speaking with the DJ, Art Nugent (aka Art King of KONG), sparks flew. That DJ made a comment on the air about what a nice voice Mom had. She called that DJ back and they talked all evening. Long story short, they met and three days later, that DJ asked her to marry him, and the rest is history. Mom and Dad were married in April 1959 and enjoyed 53 wonderful years before Dad passed away in 2012. Dad always said that Rebel Rouser was the greatest

love song ever written.

After Mom and Dad married, Dad's career took the family, which now included Skip, first to Stockton, where Mary Kay joined the family, and then to Chico, where Kevin came along. During these years, Mom was a housewife and mother, trying to corral three kids under 5, which was a job in itself! It was during this time that Mom joined a womens' philanthropic group, Beta Sigma Phi. Years later, Mom would write an article in the Beta Sigma Phi international magazine stating the following: "When one is very timid, as I was, belonging to Beta Sigma Phi will become one of her greatest assets. Many of my friends will never believe that I was ever timid, but before sorority entered my life, walking into a room of people that I didn't know was the worst thing." Throughout our travels, from Chico to Redding and back to Visalia, Mom remained a Beta Sigma Phi Sorority Sister maintaining those long lasting friendships for the rest of her life.

When our family moved back to Visalia in 1971, Mom started her career with the City of Visalia. She first worked in the Finance Department as an account clerk before moving on to the City of Visalia Redevelopment Agency in 1973. While working there from 1973 to 1981, Mom worked as a secretary, eventually working her way up to Division Manager of the Redevelopment Agency. She left the City of Visalia in 1981 to begin 25 years of employment at Self-Help Enterprises, starting as a Project Coordinator and eventually retiring as the Assistant Program Director for Housing and Rehabilitation Programs. In an excerpt from the Self-Help Enterprises Annual Report announcing Mom's retirement, the following was said about her years at SHE: 'Joanna supported successful affordable housing efforts in SHE partner communities throughout the San Joaquin Valley. She worked tirelessly with elected leaders, city managers, staff and community members from Stanislaus County to Kern County and all points in between. Her work brought millions of dollars into the Valley, touching thousands of lives and made each of our communities a

better place to live.'

Mom also was very involved in our community of Visalia. She was appointed to the City of Visalia Planning Commission in early 1990 and served two terms, serving as commission Chair in 1993 and 1994. She was also President of the Visalia Chapter of the Soroptimist International Club and was an active participant on various City of Visalia committees and also the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. Mom served as a founding member of the "Friends of the Fox", involved with the beginning of the restoration of the Fox Theater, one of Visalia's most famous landmarks. In 1996, Mom was inducted into the College of the Sequoias Hall of Fame.

In 1983, Dad's co-worker, Ann Baptista, wanted to give back to the kids of the Visalia area during the Christmas season. With Mom and Dad on board, they started Ann's Kid's for Christmas. After 40 years and the incredible support of Financial Credit Network, this party has evolved and annually serves over 350 elementary school children. Another organization near and dear to Mom and the rest of our family is the annual Happy Hearts Fundraiser for Valley Children's Hospital, in loving memory of our Heather Jo Nugent.

Mom is survived by her children, Skip Nugent and wife Misty, Mary Kay Akins and husband Michael, Kevin Nugent and wife Debra. Her grandchildren, Justin Nugent, Brett Akins, Courtney Nugent, Katie Cunningham and Kelsey Nugent; great grandchildren, Maddox Nugent, Ava Nugent, Camden Akins, Brynnley Akins, Anthony Machalk, Landon Castaneda, Nicholas Machalk and Lola Nugent. Mom is also survived by her sister, Sharon Rice and husband Wayne, niece Lisa Ingham and nephew Anthony Rice.

Mom was predeceased by her husband Art Nugent, parents Anthony and Lillian Arena, and granddaughter Heather Jo Nugent.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the incredible staff of Delta Nursing and Rehabilitation. The care that you gave our Momma will always be remembered and appreciated. Flora, you and your wonderful staff are incredible! Also, thank you to Gentiva Hospice, especially Derrick, Manny and Chaplain Jim. You three are truly a blessing to us. When she was able, Mom truly loved her "Shower by Manny"!

We are thankful and blessed that our beautiful Momma has once again joined our Dad. He always said to her "I'll love you forever and ever...and a couple of days after that.'

In lieu of flowers, remembrances for Mom can be made to "Happy Hearts" Valley Children's Hospital, 9300 Valley Children's Place, Madera, CA 93636; Kids for Christmas c/o Financial Credit Network, Inc., 2922 West Main Street, Visalia, CA 93291.

Viewing will be held 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Monday, April 15th, 2024 at Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel, 127 E. Caldwell Ave., Visalia. Mass of Christian Burial services will be held 10:30 AM Tuesday, April 16th, 2024 at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 608 N. Church Street, Visalia. Graveside services will be held 12:00 PM Tuesday, April 16th, 2024 at Visalia District Cemetery, 1300 W Goshen Ave, Visalia.

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillard.com.

Previous Events

Viewing

APR 15. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel
127 E. Caldwell Ave.
Visalia, CA 93277

Mass of Christian Burial

APR 16. 10:30 AM (PT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church
608 N. Church Street
Visalia, CA 93291

Graveside

APR 16. 12:00 PM (PT)

Visalia District Cemetery
1300 W Goshen Ave
Visalia, CA 93291

Tribute Wall



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Joanna Antoinette Nugent*



Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel - April 12, 2024 at 12:13 PM

DB

*Beautiful tribute to Joanna. A life well lived. Loving memories to hold her close to your hearts.
Don and Janine Becker*

Don & Janine Becker - April 13, 2024 at 02:43 PM

LS

“ *I will forever remember Christmas at Jo and Arts house. She and Art were the ultimate hosts and her house was always decorated so nicely for the holidays. I swear she must have started preparing in August to make sure everything was so festive.*

Laurie Strauch - April 16, 2024 at 07:22 PM

CP

“ *Skip, Kevin and family, we can't be with today but our hearts and prayer are with you all as you go through today. May God give you strength and Love in the days to come.*

*Love
Dexter & Carol*

Carol Patton - April 16, 2024 at 10:13 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Joanna Antoinette Nugent.



April 12, 2024 at 09:11 PM



“ Jennifer E. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joanna Antoinette Nugent.

Jennifer E. - April 12, 2024 at 09:11 PM



“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joanna Antoinette Nugent.



April 11, 2024 at 11:47 PM



“ Michelle McPheeters Kaufman and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joanna Antoinette Nugent.

Michelle McPheeters Kaufman and family - April 11, 2024 at 11:47 PM

TH

“ *The Rices, Ingham's and Hernandez's purchased the Divine Light for the family of Joanna Antoinette Nugent.*



The Rices, Ingham's and Hernandez's - April 05, 2024 at 05:58 PM

TH

“ *The Rices, Ingham's and Hernandez's planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joanna Antoinette Nugent.*

The Rices, Ingham's and Hernandez's - April 05, 2024 at 05:58 PM

DB

“ *We will always remember Joanna as a wonderful neighbor in Castlewood. A few ladies, Joanna, myself, and our doggies, would gather in the park next to her home every afternoon. We would exchange stories and watch our furry kids play and relax. She will be missed.*

*Peace and love to her family,
Don and Janine Becker*

Don and Janine Becker - March 27, 2024 at 09:27 PM

JC

With deepest sympathy our thoughts and prayers are with you and may God comfort the family as your cherished memories and love for her remain in your hearts forever. Johanna was a pleasure knowing; and so is our continued friendship with her children. She was an excellent example of a life well lived.

Frank & Jean Chesser

Jean Chesser - April 01, 2024 at 01:37 PM