

A tribute to Janet Claire Walker

A grieving daughter's disconnected and somewhat rambling thoughts about her extraordinary mother

September 12, 1938 - October 18, 2025

It is with mixed emotions that I share with you all the sad news of my Mom, Janet Claire Walker passing away. Here's a link to Mom's obituary and details about the funeral services which will be held on Saturday, November 15, 2025 at Grace Chapel, 59 Worthen Road, Lexington, MA.

<https://www.deefuneralhome.com/obituaries/Janet-Claire-Walker?obId=46195862#/obituaryInfo>.



Everyone my Mom Janet met was welcomed with a warm smile, a comforting hug, an invitation to sit and to share their story. With every new encounter, you either became Janet's best friend and or a member of the Walker family. Listening and trading stories over coffee, lemonade or a glass of sweet wine while sitting at the kitchen table, at the super table, or rocking on the front porch on Martha's Vineyard were those small moments in which Janet's welcoming spirit enabled her to form deep roots of genuine friendship and lasting connection with everyone who met her and who were welcomed into her heart and ever growing family of friends.

Memories of the smell and taste of the most delicious homemade desserts ranging from sweet potato pies, cream cheese brownies, cheese cakes, million dollar pound cakes, oatmeal raisin cookies, lemon ricotta cookies, and so many more delectable treats made from handwritten recipes perfected over the years and passed down to her children and grandchildren who learned to bake at her side. Yes, I too now know how to make Janet's famously delicious sweet potato pie and award winning lemon ricotta cookies.



Janet was young at heart and always willing to try something new. “Nana, would you like to play? Sure, why don’t you teach me. I’d like to learn how to play.” So, we would teach her how to play all of the games, whether it was party games like Cards Against Humanity, One Night Ultimate Werewolf, or kids games like Exploding Kittens, Magic the Gathering, Chess, Dungeons & Dragons, Casino Royale (no Nana, it’s called Clash Royale), and whatever the newest video game the grandchildren were obsessed with at the time, Janet was up for learning how to play with varying degrees of success on her part and frustration and uncontrollable laughter on the part of the grandkids. After those games were either lost or abandoned, Janet would then coyly ask “would you like to play a different game? I can teach you how to play one of my games.” Everyone would say yes, knowing that accepting to play one of Janet’s games really meant you were going to lose to Janet playing Rummy Five Hundred, Scrabble, Poker, Spades, or Pinochle. I guess now we’ll have to see who will be the new family champion of Rummy Five Hundred.





A love for music, whether it is singing along to WILD while doing Saturday morning chores; belting out the hymns, slightly off key during Sunday morning services; going to musicals like Tina and Hamilton; asking Google, or is it Alexa, to play the oldies like Smokey Robinson, the Temptations, Al Green, and the new music of artists like Tracy Chapman, Beyonce, and Kendrick Lamar; sitting in the front row with friends on Boston Common to see Marvin Gaye shock her with his performance of *Sexual Healing*; dancing along with the Queen of Rock n' Roll Tina Turner at the Garden; or beaming with pride as she suffered through her grandsons' first learning to play the piano and guitar and then graduating to hear them perform expertly at their recitals and band concerts at school, Janet's love of music was contagious.



A life long learner with an insatiable thirst for knowledge; a firm believer in experiential learning opportunities; and a desire to see the world first hand, Janet ensured that each of these traits were lovingly passed down and nurtured in each of her children and grandchildren. The countless family stories of Janet and Aunt Bobbi loading up their children in the back of the station wagon for that weekend's adventure to explore the Mohawk Trail, visit the art museums in Boston, go to a reading at the library and check out books, attend the Wampanoag's annual Pow-Wow, vacations to

Jamaica, camping in Canada, cruising to Barbados, and driving to the family reunion in South Hill Virginia; and taking classes at UMass Boston and Massasoit Community College. Janet infused her children and grandchildren with these same traits.

In his final words from 2020 U.S. Congressman John Lewis' crystalized his philosophy that "ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting into what I call good trouble, necessary trouble." Janet wholeheartedly embraced and put into practice this philosophy - she was always the first to volunteer her time, to give back to the community, and to make good trouble, necessary trouble. Whether she was helping with the churches' food pantry, leading a bible study, or organizing a prayer chain; attending protest rallies, walking picket lines, writing letters to Massachusetts State Representatives, U.S. Congressmen, and



Governors; serving on the democratic town committee or as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention for Marshfield, Lexington, and Concord throughout the years; serving on the Board for Massasoit Community College, Amnesty International, the Labor Guild, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the A. Philip Randolph Institute, or President of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), Northeast Region Local 1164; and so much more. Janet was a tireless volunteer always willing to lend a helping hand and a formidable crusader for justice and equal rights for women, minorities and workers. Janet has most definitely passed the torch of making good trouble, necessary trouble onto her children and grandchildren who have gladly and fearlessly picked it up and who will "never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."

The final recipe. A bowl filled with wonderful memories of laughter and joy, mixed with a bit of sadness that we will no longer be able to have our morning and evening chats, and a cup of a profound sense of relief that she is no longer suffering physically, my Mom, your Nana, your big sister, your Auntie, and your best friend Janet has now gone to her eternal home for her well deserved eternal rest, where I imagine her being welcomed with a cup of black coffee or a glass of ice cold Pepsi, a sliver of pie, the loving arms of my Dad and my brothers as she arrives with a hearty “here we are - home again, home again jiggity jig.”

