



Barbara F. Wysession

December 29, 2018

Barbara Fenn Wysession died peacefully in her home in Teaneck, NJ, on Saturday, Dec 29, 2018, at the age of 85. She was an unyielding force of cheerfulness and optimism who loved music and nature. Barbara was a talented musician who taught music to thousands of students both as a public-school music teacher and through private lessons, and helped countless others as a music therapist in New Jersey hospitals. Barbara played and taught the piano, cello, flute, and recorder, and later in life learned the viola da gamba, and was a professional church organist for most of her life.

Barbara was born in Berlin, NH, the daughter of Edward and Helen Fenn, and graduated from Gorham High School in 1951. She went on to receive undergraduate degrees in Music from Colby-Sawyer College and the University of New Hampshire and graduate degrees in Music Education from Harvard University and Music Therapy from Montclair State University. Barbara lived in New Jersey for most of her adult life and professional career, playing and performing with the Bergen Philharmonic, the Pro Arte Chorale, the Bergen County Chapter of the American Recorder Society, and many other musical ensembles. In addition, she joyfully returned for over 60 years to northern New Hampshire, where she was very involved with many activities and organizations, particularly the Randolph (NH) Church (as an organist) and the Randolph Mountain Club. Barbara loved the mountains of northern New Hampshire and climbed most of them - many times.

Barbara is survived by siblings Louise Howard (Purcellville, VA), Diana Dunseath (San Diego, CA), and Lincoln Fenn (Rutland, VT); daughter Lisa Wyssession (Ramsey, NJ); son Michael Wyssession and his wife Margaret Farnon (St. Louis, MO); and grandchildren William and Elizabeth. She was predeceased by her husband Alex Wyssession.

Services celebrating Barbara's life will be held in New Jersey in the spring and in New Hampshire in the summer.

Tribute Wall



“ Barbara was a dear friend who taught me much about life as a fellow music therapist. We met up in Israel one year and traveled about, which I will never forget. We also ran a private music therapy group at JCC on the palisades school of music. I enjoyed making music with her and now eight years later, I learned of her passing. She was such an encourager to love and live life to the fullest! I pray she is nonstop rejoicing and praising God! I hope to meet with her again in heaven.

MARY ROSE SCHNEIDER - November 10, 2025 at 06:34 PM



“ My Dearest Barbara, I googled Alex's name and just realized you both had passed. I worked on special projects with your husband at CURA. I had the pleasure of meeting you too. I always remember your beautiful smile and positivity. Always a kind word for everyone. All my love, Anna Rodriguez

Anna Rodriguez - February 22, 2024 at 09:13 AM



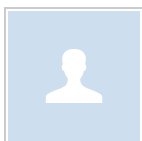
“ Barbara F. Wysession

October 08, 2023 at 09:59 PM



“ Barbara F. Wysession

October 08, 2023 at 06:27 PM



“ Barbara F. Wysession

August 30, 2022 at 02:48 PM

ME

“ I did my first practicum with Barbara, and she was such a doll! So committed to the residents and a wonderful music therapist. I will always remember her. My condolences to her family. May she rest in peace and be remembered by the people she served so faithfully.

Martha Elkins - September 02, 2019 at 02:19 PM

KG

“ I was hoping to connect with Barbara this week while in Northern New Hampshire. I am saddened to learn that she has passed. She was my student for several years while she was in the music therapy program. What an enthusiastic, gifted and kind person she was!

Sincere condolences to the family. May her memory be a blessing.

Karen D. Goodman

Professor Emerita, Music Therapy

Montclair State University

Montclair, New Jersey

Karen Goodman - August 28, 2019 at 09:20 PM

LF

“ I am the brother. We were only a year apart so Barb and I were best friends too. We had a happy childhood -also got into lots of trouble together. Her nickname was Grinny Boo. We made it through the Depression, fought the Nazis and the wicked Japs in the World War digging foxholes on the Ledge.

We spent a busy (alas car-less) high school time a mile from town. We were all into music, especially Barb. It was band, glee club, chorus, choir, operettas, and lessons. It was then that Barb guided the whole family away from any ethnic or religious prejudice(there was plenty around in those days). She dated wonderful guys with unpronuncible names with families from faraway places.

In college and after we went our separate ways each with our own families. She began early coming to Gorham and Randolph with her children in the summer building a cabin in Randolph. I so looked forward to summertime visits and family camp outs. (for 50 years!)

There were some hard times in her life which she met with a measured determination believing that all problems had solutions.

The good times were met with a grin. She was one of the great souls and I shall miss her dearly. “Linkie”

Lincoln. Feb 13, 2019

Lincoln Fenn - February 13, 2019 at 07:55 AM

CC

“ I was a 15 year old candy striper at Preakness Hospital (building 1) in the mid 80s. I met Barbara there. She played music, and read stories. She lifted people up. Her smile radiated from the inside out. She was a friend, and someone I could trust when I wasn't sure of myself. I became a nurse in 1990, and began my career at that same Preakness, but by then, Barbara was no longer there. She was loved and she will be missed.

Christine Ceriani - February 06, 2019 at 03:04 AM

NC

“ I was so sorry to hear of Barbara's return to God's loving arms. She was such a wonderfully happy and cheerful lady. Back in the 1990's, she often served as a substitute organist for us at United Reformed in Clifton. I was the interim choir director, but I don't play the organ. No matter what piece I gave her, she had it mastered for the Sunday we needed her to play. Just seeing her and hearing her greet you, made you smile. Praying you will comfort in knowing how blessed so many of us were to know her! Nancy Cooper

Nancy Cooper - January 25, 2019 at 01:47 PM

SG

“ I'm sorry for your loss. I had the honor to have worked with Barbara at Bergen Pines. Our patients loved to explore the instruments and albums in her room. Barbara would have a great big smile on her face; she was petite in stature, but she had a giant heart of gold. Barbara would share snacks she made and would proudly share pictures of her children, grandchildren, siblings and of the dogs. Barbara was a sweet beautiful woman who gave her heart and soul to music. Over 18 yrs ago Barbara honored me , by playing the piano at my wedding. We kept in touch and would meet for breakfast or would see each other at the movies. Rest In Peace ,Heaven has an Angel.



Solange Griffith-Ruff - January 17, 2019 at 07:40 PM

JM

“ Barbara occasionally substituted for me at my church job. She was a lovely lady who loved our church and was loved back by them in return. we shall miss her.

JUNE MARANO-MURRAY - January 13, 2019 at 04:17 PM

WE

“ I am Weezie, Barbara's younger sister. words are not enough for Barb she was a sunbeam in this darkened world She was reliable, predictable, calm, kind and brilliant. Every morning she made the coffee, read the New York Times, planned the day, and greeted everyone afresh. I have composed a ballad for Barb.

Weezie - January 12, 2019 at 11:11 AM

JH

“ All her adult (and earlier) life she brought her keyboard/organ skills to countless churches and concerts. At the same time she trained for and followed a second career in music therapy, which took a form that she probably could have avoided. This was working in NJ state mental institutions, working with formerly violent criminals and others who had severe mental problems. Giving so much of herself, she believed in the power of music to bring some degree of enjoyment to these people.

John Howard, brother-in-law since 1972.

John Howard - January 10, 2019 at 06:10 PM

JD

I consider myself one of Barbara Fenn Wyession's extended family. Barbara was one of my mother's greatest lifelong friends. I, like my mother, was always in awe of Barbara's most bountiful love of life and all her gifts. I have many memories of her as a young girl and then as an adult. When I was around 12 years old—one of my favorite times—we set off for an adventure—riding in her convertible, with the top down, the wind in our hair, the sun shining down on all of her sisters, my mother and me—on our way to the dairy bar for an ice cream! It was of course Barbara's idea and her enthusiasm and urging that prompted everyone to go for the ride. This moment is etched in my memory bank because I to this day can still see the sunbeams in her hair, her beautifully beaming smile, and thinking when I grow up...I want to be as glamorous and beautiful as Barbara—whom to me seemed to be smiling all the time—enjoying everyone and everything around her.

Jody Bean Flynn Dalvet - January 12, 2019 at 08:09 PM

GN

“ I was so sorry to hear of Barbara's death. As a colleague in the Northern NJ Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, she was always friendly,cheerful, witty, and gifted. We all will miss her!

Gloria Norton - January 10, 2019 at 05:28 PM

CR

“ Sending my love and condolences, Lisa. Losing your Mom is a journey of many steps. Hope you'll be in touch about services in the Spring so we can plan to participate in some way.

Cathie A Rupp - January 10, 2019 at 12:21 PM

CR

“ *Barbara was an active member of the Northern NJ American Guild of Organists for decades. She was knowledgeable, capable and always eager to help. Barbara and Lisa would sing in the Hymn Festival Choir.*

We sat together just this fall at the Bach Cantata at Grace Lutheran Church. We purred with delight over the music, the musicians and the vespers service!

A spirited, spunky lady, always with a twinkle in her eye. She had a way of sparking joy for others.

Cathie Ruppi

Cathie A Ruppi - January 10, 2019 at 12:17 PM

CF

“ *Aunt Barb was such a delightful soul- from the first moment I met her, she made me feel like a treasured part of the family. We will all miss her sweet smile.*



Carrie Fenn - January 09, 2019 at 07:55 AM

AL

“ *2 files added to the tribute wall*



Amy Lum - January 08, 2019 at 06:09 PM

SF

“ Of the many memories I have of my Aunt Barbie, I will always remember her kind and warm smile and her never-ending positivity even when faced with challenges. I remember many visits to Gorham, NH with my grandfather over the years to visit my aunties and we had some great walks and hikes around Berlin exploring the Androscoggin, and visits to Randolph to swim. I will always cherish these times we spent together. I will miss you Barbie, may you Rest In Peace. ❤️

Spencer Fenn - January 07, 2019 at 05:36 PM

MI

“ Hi - we would be very grateful if you would share your memories of Barbara with us on this page.
Thank you,
Michael and Lisa

Michael - January 04, 2019 at 01:15 PM

MI

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Michael - January 04, 2019 at 12:13 PM

OL

*We met at the Berlin, N.H. Historical Society where she was a member remember Barbara with a smile because that is the way she would greet us at our yard sales in the summer accompanied by a big hug. Please let us know when you will have the services to celebrate her life, We will attend if we can.
Please accept our sympathies for your loss.
Odette Leclerc, Board Member*

Odette Leclerc - January 13, 2019 at 10:22 AM

AH

Al and I have not only lost a good friend in Barbara—but also a hiking companion, berry picker, fellow musician, charade creator/actor, and dog-lover.

We will remember the charm of her smile, her ability to positively interpret the vicissitudes that life had presented her. Her grace and good humor transformed many instances when others would have complained.

How to deal with heavy sweat when hiking? Line your shirt with absorbent paper towels!

How to strike a wry chord about families? Write a madrigal (illustrating the full word for the charade, enacted as mad-wriggle). Her text read, "Alas, I am dumbfounded, Thoroughly astounded, Eternally I'm hounded, By relatives surrounded, Dum, dum, dum... dumfounded."

Barbara will be sorely missed.

Judy and Al Hudson

Alfred Hudson - January 18, 2019 at 12:21 PM

RD

Dear Michael,

The photo album I keep in my head has Barbara's smile, marked as a favorite. In this mental photo, she is across the aisle from me at any of the concerts that were performed in Randolph, and the smile on her face is angelic. This is the image that the sad news immediately illuminated.

Barbara's smile, when I first observed it so many years ago, did so much to change the way I listened to music. It was as if I shifted from studying mathematics to eating a hot Fudge Sunday. (Apologies to those who smile while studying mathematics. And hey, I was a math major for a short time.) At every concert thereafter, I sought Barbara's glowing face as an integral part of my pleasure.

Barbara was also a sister in folk dancing for me. I knew no one else in Randolph who had this past that I also had. I never saw her in folk action other than in contras and squares in Randolph, but it was easy to imagine her moving to intricate Balkan foot patterns and rhythms with the same glowing pleasure she displayed at Randolph concerts. I felt as if we shared a secret love of dance, although we didn't talk much about it.

I knew that Barbara had hardships in her life. We didn't talk about that too much either, but her matter of factness mixed with sadness was also a teaching for me.

Her loss goes deep for me. Thank you for the photos you sent. They will keep her smile refreshed in my heart.

*Sending my heartfelt sympathy for your loss and ours,
Renee Dunham*

Renee Dunham - January 26, 2019 at 10:25 PM

LF

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In college and after we went our separate ways each with our own families. Barb started very early coming up to Randolph and Gorham in the summers with her children eventually building a cabin in Randolph. I so looked forward to summertime visits and family camp outs. We did this for many years (50) There were some hard times in Barbs life which she met with a measured determination believing that all problems had solutions. The good times were met with a grin. She was one of the great souls and I will miss her dearly. "Linkie"

Lincoln. Feb 12, 20119

Lincoln Fenn - February 12, 2019 at 04:45 PM