



Maxine L. (Denbow) Stenger

April 25, 1931 - January 3, 2021

WESTBROOK - Maxine Louise Denbow Stenger, 89, died on January 3, 2021 with family members holding her hand. A recent cancer diagnosis caused her to spend her final days at Gosnell House Hospice surrounded by many of those she loved, a pleasure that had eluded her during the long months of pandemic.

Maxine was born in Portland. She grew up in Rockland under the loving care and guidance of Emily Murray, the only mother Maxine ever knew. Soon after graduating from Rockland High School, Maxine met Tom Stenger of Friendship. She carried many happy memories of time spent with his parents who ran The Lobster Pot in Friendship during their courtship.

Maxine and Tom were married on August 16, 1952. With Tom in the Navy, their married life began with various assignments along the East Coast before settling back in the Rockland neighborhood she grew up in. In 1967, Tom's career took them to Gorham and into the home they lived in for 51 years. In 2018, they moved to Stroudwater Lodge in Westbrook.

Maxine was first and foremost a mother and a homemaker. She loved their home on Sebago Lake Road and proudly raised their three children there. Maxine and Tom were thrilled beyond words when grandson, Matthew Thomas, was born. Having the opportunity to see Matt grow into a kind and successful young man filled them with pride. Maxine was heartbroken when pandemic related lockdowns meant she and Tom were not able to attend or join in celebrations of Matt's Cum Laude graduation from the University of Maine last May.

Maxine had a gift for making lifelong friends wherever she went. She was always the first person to arrive at a new neighbor's door to welcome them, usually carrying a plate of fresh baked goodies.

Always ready to lend a helping hand or a hug, Maxine spent countless hours and found

great joy in volunteering for a wide variety of organizations including the Baxter Memorial Library, Great Falls Elementary and The Ronald McDonald House where she was so pleased to have been one of the original volunteers selected to help open the House. She was a devoted member of Saint Anne's Parish in Gorham. She devoted herself to any and all assistance needed at the church ranging from teaching CCD classes to perhaps her most famous roles delighting children through the years as the best ever Mrs. Santa Claus.

Maxine would be quick to tell you that she found her favorite job when, after her own children were grown, Sandy and Paul Penna hired her to be a Nanny for their newborn daughter. She liked it so much she kept the position for 19 years. Later in life, she would also share that the joy she found in watching Katie and her younger brother Nick grow up was something she would have ultimately have done for free.

Maxine is survived by her husband of 68 years, Thomas E Stenger; children, Jill (Peter) King, Thomas Jr (Jayne) Stenger, Amy (Bob) Doyle; grandson Matthew Thomas Stenger and her brother, Robert Denbow.

She is also survived by her beloved companion of many years, Buddy the cat and would certainly be glad to know that he is now dedicating all his time to looking after Tom.

In these extraordinary times, the family would like to thank the wonderful staff at Stroudwater Lodge and Gosnell House for the dedicated and loving care they provided to Maxine even as she did her best to convince them (and all of us) that she was just fine and that someone else must certainly need more help than she did.

At Maxine's request there will be no memorial services.

If you would like to honor Maxine's memory in some way, please consider making a donation to: Baxter Memorial Library, 71 South Street, Gorham, ME 04038 Or Ronald McDonald House of Portland, 250 Brackett Street, Portland, ME 04102.

Comments



“ Maxine was such a sweet person to my husband and his brothers when they were young. Kevin Merriman would send his condolences. I as well think of all the times that you mom would offer a kind smile or a delicious goodie. Becky (Wood) Merriman

Rebecca Merriman - January 18 at 03:32 PM



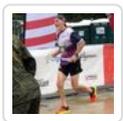
“ We are so very sorry for your loss . Maxine was one of the sweetest persons I ever met. She had so much love ,rather it was for someone she knew or a stranger she met on the street !! It's so hard to lose your mom and we hope all your special memories of her will always be with you.Please give our sympathy to your dad !

David & Jeanne Denbow - January 16 at 04:54 PM



“ Thoughts and prayers to Tom, Jill and Tom Jr., I am certain now that Mom, Maxine, and Mary Lou are all together they are having a wonderful time. Condolences to you all.

Jeff Sukeforth - January 16 at 03:06 PM



“ Maxine was my friend Jill's mother. She kind to me and generous. I remember her mostly around the time we were graduating from high school, we gathered at her house and shared some social time with the graduates, a time together before we launched ourselves out into the world. Perhaps, she helped us remember our friends from high school, I think so. My prayers and condolences to Jill and her family.

Paul Nicolaides - January 16 at 01:19 PM



“ Sorry for your loss, I will always remember her playing the perfect Mrs Claus at St. Annes Church.
God bless her beautiful soul

Laurie (Proulx) MacDonald - January 16 at 10:28 AM



“ The entire Johnson family is so sad to learn of Maxine’s passing. I know that each and every one of us has a special memory of her and her kindness. She truly made the world a better place and will be dearly missed.

Evan Johnson - January 16 at 01:51 AM



“ My heart goes out to Tom, Jill, Thomas and Amy for your loss. You’ve captured a great picture of Maxine! Always smiling, always forward leaning looking to engage with and help her family and many friends. Though over time we had lost pretty much lost touch, I always loved it when we would talk and catch up and exchange Christmas cards. She was so proud of her kids! With deepest sympathy. - Connie Sukeforth Harrison

connie harrison - January 15 at 04:15 PM



“ Praying for you Dear family of Maxine. Thankful for many good memories of Maxine at St. Anne's.

Rob Poissant - January 15 at 01:51 AM



“ Sorry to hear of Maxine's passing. Our sympathy goes out to all of the family. One of my earliest memories of Maxine was when she was "Mrs. Claus" at St. Anne's church. As our family got to know her over the years, it became apparent how easy she fit into that role. She was always so thoughtful, friendly and was a true friend to my mother and our family and many people in the community. I remember once taking her to a play at Gorham High School and how excited she was to go and see all the kids perform. She always wore a beautiful smile and always had a good story to tell to make you laugh. We will miss you.

Jeff Poirier - January 14 at 05:20 PM



“ So sorry to hear of the lost of Maxine. I met Maxine when we were both at St. Josephs Rehab Center. She would come to visit me in my room and brighten my day. She always had lovely stories to tell and when I became mobile she would wait for me to wheel down to the lunch area so that we could enjoy lunch together. She always spoke highly of Tom and the children. She was truly a remarkable woman and I will keep hold of the memory of the woman who brightened my days. Again, so sorry for your loss. Your family will be in my prayers. Rosemary Campbell

Rosemarie Campbell - January 14 at 10:07 AM



“ Our heartfelt condolences to the Stenger family. We met Maxine at St Anne's church many years ago. We were a young family with a special needs child and Maxine always greeted us with a smile, full acceptance and total unconditional love. Her smile, kindness and spirit meant so very much to us and our now fully grown children have such great memories of Mrs Santa Claus. She has a special place in heaven. Judy and Les Berry

judy Berry - January 14 at 09:58 AM



“ I met Maxine at Stroudwater Lodge...she had a warm glow and an inviting spirit. Her smile and kind words will be missed. Sincere condolences to her family.

Denise Neal - January 14 at 07:43 AM