



Barbara J. Holcombe O'Brien

June 13, 1935 - October 12, 2023

Barbara Jean Holcombe O'Brien (nee Brown) was born on June 13, 1935 in Glendale, California to Velma Brown and peacefully passed on October 12, 2023 at home in Coarsegold, California surrounded by family and friends.

Barbara grew up in the San Fernando Valley with her granddaddy Dwayne Brown, grandma Minnie Pearl, and their ten children, including her mother Velma. Since Barbara was the same age as the youngest, she was raised within the large Brown family, giving her the lifelong love of family that made her so special. As a toddler, Barbara's stepdad James Eledge joined the family adding more members to her clan.

Being a child during World War II and seeing her beloved uncles go off to war gave her the patriotic spirit of the "Greatest Generation". She held onto this spirit throughout her life with great pride.

Stories have been told that on her maternal side, she is a direct decedent of the original Mayflower settlers. Later in life thanks to DNA results, she found out that her biological father was a full-blooded Italian making her a first generation Italian-American.

An important part of her childhood was Calvary Church in North Hollywood, CA where Pastor Hulpke made a spiritual impact on her life and members of

the youth group became lifelong friends.

Barbara started working as a “Mom’s Helper” at a very young age to add income to the household doing chores such as babysitting and ironing. After graduating from North Hollywood High School in 1954, she went on to a career in the accounting field for over 40 years at various companies.

Barbara saw her first love Freddy Holcombe when she was 14 years old at Calvary Church and made up her mind she was going to marry him. They became good friends and high school sweethearts. Freddy joined the Marines, rose to the rank of Corporal and then married Barbara on Feb 11, 1956 before going overseas. On February 17, 1956, the plane Freddy was in crashed leaving Barbara a gold star widow at the age of 20. Nine months later Barbara was blessed with Freddy’s daughter Deborah Jean Holcombe.

During this new chapter in her life, Barbara became a big sister to Jody Eledge born just three months before her own baby. Now Barbara had two babies to love and look after, involving Jody in many activities throughout the years.

In 1958, Barbara and daughter Debbie moved to Clovis, New Mexico for a couple of years to help her sister-in-law Betty Ann with her growing family.

Returning to Southern California, Barbara met the new love of her life Kerry O’Brien. The next five years were spent having fun on the beaches of Southern California, Catalina Island and Mexico, before settling down and starting their family with daughter Carolyn (Cara) Jean O’Brien born in 1966.

A highlight of Barbara’s life was the purchase of her Mercedes house in Arleta, Ca where she welcomed her pride and joy, Kerry Michael (Mike) O’Brien in 1976.

In 1978, wanting to leave the hustle and bustle of city life, Barbara and Kerry decided to move their family to the Sierra foothills in Madera County, CA purchasing 40 acres of raw land and made a home for their kids to grow up in. Living in the country gave their kids a good life but meant hours of driving. This never stopped Barbara from attending every sport and school event, proving her dedication to her children.

After the children left home and married, Debbie to Kevin Funderburg and Mike to Lizzette Castro, Barbara and Kerry moved into the Fresno area, where Barbara became active in many clubs - The Moose Organization and The Grandmother's Club for over twenty years, The Poverello House for several years, as well as her Church and small social groups. These led to lifetime relationships that she cherished.

Barbara retired in 2000 giving her more time to enjoy her clubs and friends, with her number one priority being her grandkids: Brittany, Paul and Kevin Funderburg; Ryan, Ellie and Emma Russell; Michaela, Chloe, Leila and Gavin O'Brien and the great grandkids Ellie Funderburg, Riley and Nora Russell, Oliver Starburg.

Barbara lost her beloved Kerry in 2002, and in 2009 she moved in with her daughter Cara in Coarsegold, CA where she joined more clubs and gained more friendships. This is reflected in the visits, phone calls and messages received from people in every walk of her life. These messages all spoke of her love of family, friends and vibrant personality.

A Funeral Service will be held at Chapel of the Light Funeral Home on Saturday, October 28, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. Pastor Mansel Trimble of Golden Valley Baptist Church in Madera will officiate.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

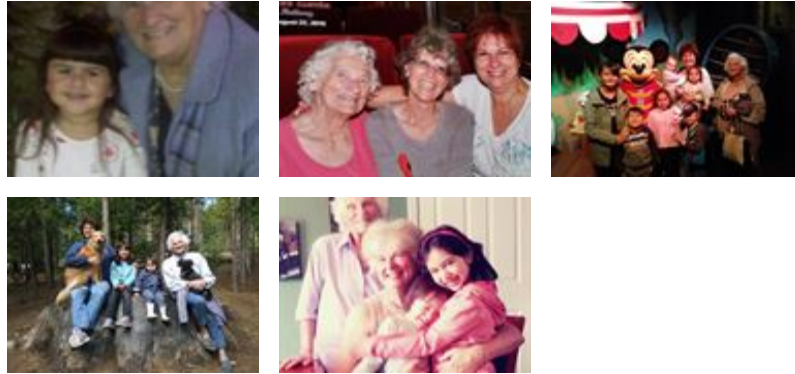
OCT **28**. 1:00 PM (PT)

Chapel of the Light
1620 W. Belmont Avenue
Fresno, CA 93728
michael@chapelofthelight.com
<http://www.chapelofthelight.com>

Tribute Wall



“ 63 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Chapel Of The Light Funeral Home and Mausoleum - October 27, 2023 at 12:46 PM



“ *Pretty Please* was purchased for the family of **Barbara J. Holcombe O'Brien**.



October 27, 2023 at 02:48 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of **Barbara J. Holcombe O'Brien**.

October 27, 2023 at 02:48 AM

DJ

“ *Debbie Jean lit a candle in memory of
Barbara Holcombe-O'Brien*



Debbie Jean - October 21, 2023 at 09:37 PM