



Nicolyn Sue Hayman

November 3, 1947 - July 28, 2020

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Niki Hayman, a career elementary teacher in San Diego City Schools, passed away on Tuesday, July 28, 2020 in Lady Lake, Florida. She was 72. In recent years, her health had been in steady decline. At long last, she has found eternal peace.

Niki was born in Cleveland, Ohio, the second of seven children. She graduated from Ohio State University in 1971 and signed her first teaching contract with Cleveland City Schools that same year. In 1973, she packed up her old car and headed west, settling in San Diego. It was here that she carved out a new life by force of her strong will, innate intelligence and passionate work ethic.

She sought after certification to teach in California, earning her master's degree from Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena in 1976. She returned to San Diego, working first at Baker Elementary in Southeast San Diego from 1976-78 before transferring to John Paul Jones Elementary in Serra Mesa. There she retired in 2009.

Niki will be remembered by colleagues, students and friends as a fantastic, natural born teacher, weaving songs, stories from her life and humor into each relationship. Niki loved live music, especially bluegrass, and became an accomplished guitarist. She loved going to the theater and enjoyed season tickets to The Old Globe and La Jolla Playhouse for many years. She was passionate about her dogs, first Sam and then Spencer, both of whom became well known and much beloved by her students.

Niki will be remembered by her family as the glue that held everyone together. She was warm and generous, extremely smart and quick witted. She was a fabulous cook and was famous for her world class cherry pie. Niki loved her community, from South Mission Jetty to Crystal Pier. Thousands of students and their families were blessed by her time spent in San Diego.

Niki is survived by her siblings Ed, Bruce, Sally, Jon, Jill and Matt. We all love her very much. A celebration of life gathering will be held later this year in Pacific Beach.

Arrangements entrusted to Beyers Funeral Home and Crematory, Lady Lake, FL. Online condolences may be left at www.BeyersFuneralHome.com

Tribute Wall

CS

“ Niki was my very dear friend and colleague. She had such a joy of teaching and her students loved her. Her wit and humor kept us laughing all the time, in and out of the classroom. She was a loving and caring friend. I'll miss her. May her memory be a blessing.

Cindy Schwartz - August 03, 2020 at 10:52 AM

BH

“ I was born three years after Niki. She was the favorite of all her siblings. I was at Ohio State University when Niki was a student there. Niki put herself through college by working summers and part-time jobs during school. She even helped me get a couple of part-time jobs at University Hospital. She was smart; she loved teaching children; and she loved going to the theater. But what I will remember most about my dear sister is this: she had a good heart.

Bruce Hayman - August 03, 2020 at 10:40 AM

SH

“ Jill,
My heart and prayers go out to you and your family. Niki was and still is awesome and I had so much fun with her when you and I were preparing special music for church in Indiana. You and Niki will be forever in my heart.

Sandra L Hobbs - July 30, 2020 at 10:55 PM

“ That I was born with Appalachia in my DNA is something I did not discover until my early 20s. It was obvious, of course, that both my parents were born and raised in West Virginia. I am certain that my mom, especially, always regarded Parkersburg as her home. Being one of the younger kids in our family of seven, I rode the hump (the transmission tunnel), of the 58 Plymouth on many trips to the region. In those days we took the two-lane blacktop of Route 21 all the way south through the verdant, rolling hills of southern Ohio, hoping to stop at Zanesvilles storied Brown Cow Drive-In for a hamburger, french fries and a coke, before crossing the Ohio River at Marietta and then down into Parkersburg.

It was a world away from our life in Cleveland to be sure. The people were friendlier and spoke with a twang, an accent which, in retrospect, my father seemed to abhor. The twang was not a purely southern accent to my ear. It did, however, take advantage of a slower, more deliberate cadence which sort of rounded off the sharp the edges of life, making it homier and less fussy feeling. The tea was sweeter at supper. The portions were larger and the conversation seemed to have more laughs than the ice storm that typically raged at our own dining room table.

Just to the south of Parkersburg lay the rich bituminous coal seams found in the rugged terrain of southern West Virginia, criss-crossed with a roughly hewn network of railway lines. The Appalachia I discovered in myself was not unlike that coal, hidden just below, as it were, in the isolated hills and hollows of my soul. And, when I refer to my soul, thats exactly what I mean. However, the process of mining it did not involve the intensive physical labor of those mountaineers. My own Appalachia was revealed through music. There are two women who were essential in my own mining operation: my oldest sister Niki and Emmylou Harris.

Niki was the oldest daughter of the 7 siblings. She was born 2 years after the end of WWII and entered the family during a time when trips to West Virginia were more frequent and stays were longer.

She carried real memories of grandparents and extended family that I never knew. In a very real sense, her tea bag steeped much longer in the regional culture than mine ever did. Her record collection included folk music featuring three and four part harmonies and wonderfully arranged acoustic instrumentation. I am confident that her musical curiosity was piqued by the original sources of the songs she heard covered by artists of the present day. That's what led her to discover Doc Watson, Merle Travis, Maybelle and Sarah Carter and Bill Monroe and The Bluegrass Boys, just to name a few.

It was at Niki's apartment that I discovered Emmylou Harris, our generations flamekeeper of traditional country and bluegrass music. Because I was a faithful reader of album jackets and liner notes, I embarked on a musical odyssey of my own, retracing Emmylou's own journey through Gram Parsons and The Flying Burrito Brothers which led me to Charlie and Ira Louvin, Boudleaux and Felice Bryant, Hank Williams and The Stanley Brothers. The through line in this music was what I call bluegrass gospel, sacred selections of loss and faith and hope that tell me of the land of the unclouded day. This was music that harkened back to the acapella singing in the Church of Christ, hymns I learned at my mother's side, music sung by the very folks who settled in the rugged mountains of Appalachia.

*For me, the epitome of my Appalachia soul music was Ralph Stanleys *The Darkest Hour is Just Before Dawn*, interpreted by Emmylou and Ricky Skaggs on the 1980 album *Roses in the Snow*. Brian Aherns masterful production and the intuitive and respectful playing of The Hot Band showed me that the narrow way truly leads home. In listening, even to this day, it is not difficult for me to imagine that similar strains were heard on the RCA Radiola high boy console radios of the dearly departed in my parents West Virginia home. I am forever thankful that Niki Sue and Emmylou helped me turn my own radio on.*

BG

“ *She lived the best & happiest life she could have! Now she is at peace. Niki will be so fondly remembered by all who knew her. You have my most heartfelt sympathy.*

Barbara J Gillan - July 30, 2020 at 12:03 AM

DM

“ *Niki was a dear, dear friend who will be missed. She was a wonderful teacher and influenced many young lives. She will be remembered for her sense of humor and quick wit. My condolences to the entire Hayman family.*

Dawn Moeller - July 29, 2020 at 07:59 PM