



## Ann Thomas Mills

April 25, 1941 - September 4, 2018

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Ann Thomas Mills, 77, on September 4, 2018. She died peacefully at home, attended by husband Nelson and children Michelle and Galen.

Ann was born Ann Louise Thomas on April 25, 1941, in Jacksonville, Florida. In 1949 she moved with her family to Norfolk, VA where she attended Granby High School, graduating in 1958. She went on to attend The College of William and Mary, where she was one of few women of her generation to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics in 1962. She was hired as a Systems Engineer at IBM in Norfolk, where one of her main duties included teaching computer programming. In 1964 she met her future husband, Ensign Nelson A. Mills, when he was one of her students in a programming course. Nelson was immediately taken by her, primarily for her intelligence, but also because of her beauty and kindness. They were married in 1966 at the chapel on the Norfolk Naval Base. Later after Ann had become a middle school teacher, her father Miles – who had an infamous sense of humor – liked to raise eyebrows by telling people she had married one of her students.

In 1967 when Nelson was released from the Navy the couple moved to Silver Spring, Maryland. There Ann taught middle school and Nelson worked for Control Data Corporation. In 1968 their daughter Michelle was born, and the following year they moved to San Jose, California with Control Data where son Galen was born in 1972.

In 1976 the family moved to Corvallis, Oregon when Nelson took a new job with Hewlett-Packard. Once in Corvallis, Ann completed a Masters Degree in Math Education at Oregon State University in 1978, and then became a math instructor at Linn Benton Community College Benton Center. Once at LBCC, Ann worked hard to convert traditional mathematics classroom teaching curriculum into a self-paced lab learning environment. The Math Lab helped students who struggled with math to succeed, with its self-paced format and one-on-one help with concepts and problems whenever needed. Helping so many students who normally struggled to pass the math courses they needed in order to

further their educational and life goals was one of her proudest achievements. She was Program Coordinator for the Math Lab until her retirement in 1999.

Ann's greatest pleasure was spending time with her family. She loved family gatherings and celebrations. She also loved time spent with her many friends. She was an avid reader, and belonged to two book clubs (one of which she founded). She also greatly enjoyed duplicate bridge and played several times a week as a member of the American Contract Bridge League. Friends and family will also remember her as a fierce competitor on Words With Friends. Ann loved to travel and experience new places and cultures.

People who knew Ann knew her as a giver. Among the many volunteer organizations she worked with throughout her lifetime were SHIBA (Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance) and Benton Hospice (renamed Lumina Hospice). It was another hospice organization – Samaritan Evergreen Hospice – who in turn provided wonderful care to her at the end of her life, for which her family will be forever grateful.

Ann was preceded in death by her parents, Miles Harrison Thomas and Mary Birkett Thomas. She is survived by husband Nelson Mills, sister Carolyn (husband Peter) Jones, sister Janet Thomas, daughter Michelle Mills, son Galen (wife Sally) Mills, and grandchildren Anson and Augustus (Gus) Mills, as well as by many cousins, nieces and nephews, and tons of friends.

A memorial celebration of life will be held at the Oregon State University CH2M Hill Alumni Association from 2-4 pm on September 24. All are welcome to attend. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation in Ann's name to the Samaritan Pastega Regional Cancer Center, their local hospice organization, or any charitable organization that supports education for the underserved.

Please leave thoughts and condolences at [www.mchenryfuneralhome.com](http://www.mchenryfuneralhome.com).

# Events

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**SEP** **Celebration of Life** 02:00PM - 04:00PM

**24**

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CH2M HILL Alumni Center

725 SW 26th St., Corvallis, OR, US, 97331

# Comments

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“ Dear Nelson, Michelle, and Galen,

We are very sad to read of Ann's passing. She was, indeed, intelligent, beautiful, and kind as Nelson recognized quite early! We so enjoyed her humor and easy-going demeanor when we spent three weeks in Greece more than 20 years ago. Ann was one of the first to say "Yes" to our Greek adventure and then brought Carolyn and Pete into the group. What fun we had with the Mills family!

I always enjoyed my encounters with Ann--at Mountain View, out shopping, at the Country Club--wherever life happens. She was open, honest, and friendly, and I loved the southern lilt in her voice!

I have let Rob know of Ann's passing and, as a friend of Michelle and Galen, I'm sure you will hear from him. We will all miss her.

The Harts  
Anne, Roy, Karen, and Rob

**The Hart Family** - September 16, 2018 at 03:25 PM



“ Dear Mills family,

I am truly sorry for your loss. Ann was always so kind and pleasant with me, whether I was visiting with Michelle, or coaching with Nelson ... maybe I even saw her up at Galen's house when we were neighbors in Portland? I haven't had the chance to see you in some time, but you all have been a part of my life, and I am thinking of you as you process this difficult time.

I live in Albania now (not Albany ... the country of Albania), but will be in Portland in the summer. Perhaps we will be able to catch up.

Warmly,

Rob

**Rob** - September 17, 2018 at 01:04 PM



“ Dear Nelson, I was stunned to hear about your recent loss of Ann. You are on my prayer list as you cope with this big change in your life. May your many good memories bring comfort. Blessings and grace, Ione

**Ione Crandell** - September 18, 2018 at 06:15 PM



“ Dear Nelson,  
Sincerest condolences. Though I cannot imagine the magnitude of your loss, you are in our thoughts.

Lynn and Bob Tillman

**Lynn Tillman** - September 19, 2018 at 01:08 PM



“ Dear Nelson, Michelle and Galen,  
Please accept our condolences as well. Ann was a special person and anyone who met her had the same impressions that Nelson did when he met her. We always appreciated her friendliness, kindness and sense of humor. We have many fond memories whether it was on the soccer field or basketball court as we watched our children and teenagers play their respective sports. You are all in our thoughts, JoAnne and Jack Walstad

**JoAnne Walstad** - September 20, 2018 at 06:54 PM



“ Dear Nelson, Michelle and Galen,  
I was fortunate enough to teach at Benton Center at the same time Ann was there. We both loved math and tried to make our students share our enthusiasm. The atmosphere of her classroom was one of caring and understanding.

I also enjoyed meeting Ann at Crescent Valley events and soccer as our kids were the same age.

I'm sorry that once we both left Benton Center and our kids graduated that I didn't see much of Ann.

I noticed that the family requested donations to educational institutions that serve the underserved. I have contacted the Linn-Benton Community College Foundation. If you want to donate in Ann's name to the Education Fund, the money will be earmarked to help the students which Ann would want to help.

You are all in our thoughts.

Carolyn and John Gardner

**Carolyn** - September 22, 2018 at 01:27 PM