

Diane Aileen Berry

Jan. 1, 1954 — Aug. 28, 2021

Diane Aileen Berry's soul left this world on Aug. 28, 2021, at Columbia Memorial Hospital while surrounded by her husband, Alan, and two sons, Ryan and Kevin. Her spirit and the lasting impact of her extraordinarily kind heart and fiercely strong-willed integrity will live eternal among those who were lucky enough to know her as family or friend. She was a beloved and cherished person among her family, friends and the community she passionately served. She lived a life with distinction, honor and generosity.

Diane was born on Jan. 1, 1954, in Tillamook. Diane was the youngest of three daughters born to Harold and Roletta Wyss, and she enjoyed a pleasant childhood on their dairy farm along the Trask River. Diane's sisters fondly recount swimming in the river together, climbing trees and putting the farm kittens in their baby buggies with their dolls. Diane became interested in horses at a young age and was involved in 4-H, showing cows and horses.

Diane graduated from Tillamook High School in 1972, where she met her future husband, Alan Berry, who was three years her senior. Diane and Alan began dating her senior year. Alan was working for the Oregon Department of Forestry as a crew foreman at the time, patrolling the remnants of the Tillamook Burn. Diane came to visit the crew with a friend, and the two were formally introduced. Alan immediately recognized the quality of Diane's character and her beauty, and he successfully secured a future first date before they parted ways.

After high school, Diane continued her education at Mount Hood Community College, where she received an associate degree in floristry. Diane would later go on to offer annual classes in design at Clatsop Community College.

Diane and Alan were wed in Tillamook on May 17, 1975. Diane and Alan moved to Astoria when Alan found full time work with the Astoria division of the Oregon Department of Forestry. Diane worked briefly for Clatsop County from 1975 to 1976 before settling into her calling as a floral designer. Over the next three decades, Diane would go on to work for a variety of mom-and-pop flower shops in Astoria, most notably Lloyd's Flowers and More, and Erickson Floral Co.

In 1977, Diane and Alan settled into their longtime home in Youngs River. At just under 3 acres, the property was ideal for Diane to pursue her love of horses. The addition of a three-stall barn, complete with a tack room, hayloft and riding arena, coupled with two fenced pastures, helped her realize her equestrian dream. Diane enjoyed many decades of riding her horses above the house in the vast expanse of timberland it was adjoined to. Diane also found the overgrown logging roads to be full of her favorite trailing blackberries in the summer, which she always touted as being much more flavorful and better in texture when compared to the invasive Himalayan blackberries. Diane was never dissuaded by the occasional wasp sting, or her regular summertime encounters with black bears, which also shared the same affinity for the berries.

In July 1985, Diane welcomed her first son, Ryan, into the world, followed by her second son, Kevin, in May 1988. Diane was an active parent with a deep love for both of her children. As a parent, Diane was known for her unshakable composure and level temperament, even when faced with the most vitriol of childhood tantrums, but even more so for being there whenever her boys needed the sensitivity and nurturing that only a mother's touch could provide. Diane's strong moral character ultimately provided her boys with something dubbed the "guilt trip gene," later discovered to simply be a good conscience. Diane saw to it that she was actively involved in both of her boy's lives as children, whether it was chaperoning a field trip, a late night frog hunt in the field, reading "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" for the 400th time or attending a myriad of sporting events, she was always a strong advocate of her children and their passions. Once her boys were grown, the mother in her did not subside. Diane continued to play an invaluable role as an advisor, confidant, but most of all an unwaveringly loving mother until the day she passed.

Diane was never one to wait for others to take action. She had a strong go-out-and-get-it mindset regarding things she was passionate about, and she would see to it that she advocated heavily for her community and hobbies.

In 1994, Diane helped found the North Coast Chapter of Oregon Equestrian Trails, an organization in which Diane remained actively involved until her passing. During her 27 years of involvement, Diane held many positions within her chapter, including chairman, trail boss and field services. Diane's persistence and dedication were instrumental in the founding of Northrup Creek Horse Camp, which opened in 2006 under the management of the Oregon Department of Forestry. In honor of Diane's volunteer efforts, leadership and countless hours of trail maintenance, among other things, the "Diane Berry Trailhead" was erected in 2013. In 2014, Diane was recognized by her North Coast chapter as a "Super Volunteer." In 2015, Diane organized Horse Fest at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds. The well-attended event brought in clinicians and speakers who shared their expertise in all things equestrian and ran for a few years. In July 2021, Diane was honored as the Grand Marshal at the Northrup Creek Fourth of July Parade.

Diane's sunup to sundown style work ethic spoke for itself among those who knew her. It came as no surprise when she decided to try her hand at entrepreneurship on top of raising a family and her day job. In the late 1990s, Diane founded Farm Country Specialties, a small business that sold a variety of powdered French toast batters in cutely decorated plaid bags sealed with a bow-tied string made of straw. Diane, who learned the recipe from her mother, went on to perfect and expand upon it. Diane spent nearly a decade pursuing this labor of love, using the experience to help further her business smarts, and also as an opportunity to teach her sons valuable lessons in attention to detail as they assisted her in packaging the product.

In 2009, Diane's dream of owning and operating her own store came to fruition. Diane's entrepreneurial spirit, frugal business sense, decades of experience and strong customer service skills led her to leave her job at Erickson Floral to forge her own path as the founder of her own business, Bloomin Crazy Floral. Diane said the name came to her in a dream. However, Bloomin Crazy was fitting as Diane not only started this business following the Great Recession of 2008, but went on to successfully grow the business until the time of her passing.

Diane established herself as a floral designer who had an eye for detail with an ever-evolving creativity. Diane always led from the front. Her exceptional work ethic was a defining characteristic. She was always quick to greet her customers with a smile and was a miracle worker when it came down to the last-minute Hail Mary orders. Diane was determined to establish why a small business like hers was the premier choice in an ever-expanding market of box-store flowers.

As a business owner, Diane was fully engaged in the community and donated her time and money to many causes. In 2019 Diane was honored with the Clatsop Economic Development Resources award for Small Business Entrepreneurship. In response to Diane winning the award, the Coast River Business Journal had the following to say:

"Bloomin Crazy Floral has won the Best Florist Award in the annual Daily Astorian 'Best of' poll almost every year since opening. Diane Berry, owner, strives for quality product, great customer service and an ever changing inventory to keep up with the trends.

Bloomin Crazy Floral has donated to many causes, including Clatsop Animal Assistance, Assistance League, Knappa scholarship fundraisers and others. Berry also served on the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association Promotion Committee, and utilized the 2017 cluster analysis to diversify her inventory.

Berry recently expanded her business significantly, which is a testimony to her hard work and dedication."

Diane's family is proud of her accomplishments beyond measure and would like to encourage people to continue to patronize Bloomin Crazy Floral. Their hope and desire is to keep the shop intact and functioning as a living memorial to Diane's legacy.

In 2012, Diane and Alan moved into what was to become their forever home in the Lewis and Clark area. Diane enjoyed that the property had large well-draining pastures, lots of sun and 10 acres for her horses to roam. Diane, with a large contribution from Alan's labor, went on to overhaul the house, barn and property to make it as she saw fit.

In August 2016, Diane was proud to watch her son, Kevin, graduate from the police academy, and to attend his wedding the following weekend.

In September 2018, Diane watched as her eldest son, Ryan, got married. Diane was always proud of Ryan's service in the U.S. Air Force, and she made every effort she could to attend his many graduation and promotion ceremonies. Finally, she lived to see Ryan achieve his dream of becoming a commercial pilot.

Diane did an extraordinary job arranging the flowers and decorations for both of her son's weddings. Diane loved her boys, but she was smitten to welcome two long-awaited and beautiful daughters into the family.

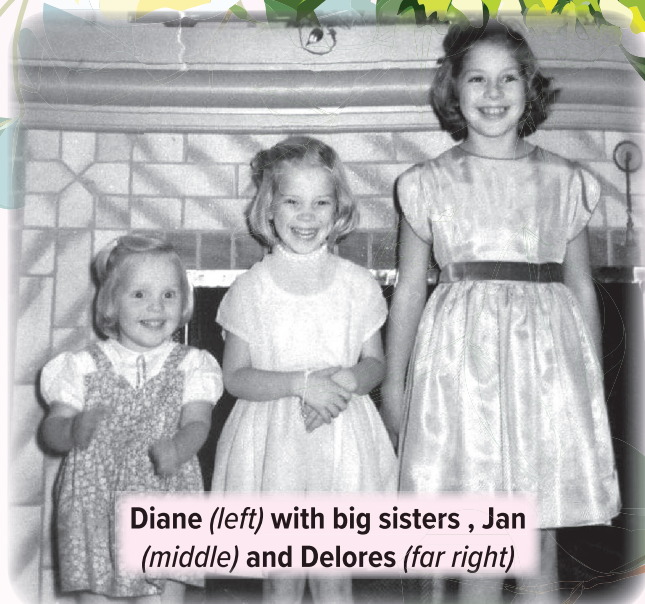
In September 2018, Diane found a new calling as a grandmother to a little boy. Trask, Kevin's son, was proudly named in honor of Diane's parents and the undeniable influence his own time spent on the Trask River as a boy played into who he was to become. Diane loved spending time with Trask, particularly teaching him the fine art that is 1980s classic rock. Their love of watching ZZ Top music videos was a precious sight to see. Diane bought Trask his own little wheelbarrow, as he loved helping his grandma do "barn chores." Diane was always thinking of others, a trend that continued with the arrival of Trask, and the many thoughtful gifts she regularly brought by for him. Trask's "horse grandma" will surely be missed.

Diane took an active role in state and local politics. She reached out to the offices of state Sen. Betsy Johnson and state Rep. Suzanne Weber on multiple occasions regarding issues that were important to her. She believed in representative government and made sure to utilize her voice in advocating for things she believed in.

Diane was always proud of her Swiss heritage. Some of Diane's fondest memories were her travels to Switzerland in the early 1990s with her parents and then again in 2019 with her sister, Jan, and her friends. Diane's happy places were always best viewed from the saddle, and riding horses in the Alps was a dream come true.

Diane is survived by her husband of 46 years, Alan Berry; her son, Ryan Berry, and daughter-in-law, Anny Berry, of Watsonville, California; her son, Kevin Berry, daughter-in-law, Courtney Berry, and grandson, Trask Berry, of Astoria; her sister, Delores Pliska (Wyss), of Bend; her sister, Janice Harris (Wyss), of Tillamook; and many nieces, nephews and extended family. Diane was preceded in death by her parents, Harold and Roletta Wyss, of Tillamook. Diane was preceded in death by her favorite horse, "Tuff," and her favorite cat, "Muffy."

Diane's celebration of life will be held at a later date when it is determined to be more prudent for large gatherings. Diane was a special person to many people, and her family wishes to give everyone who adored her the same opportunity to share stories and pay their respects in person. For those people interested in doing something in Diane's memory, more information regarding the matter will be available at the celebration of life. For those interested in the most current information regarding her celebration of life, please join the Facebook group "Diane Aileen Berry's Celebration of Life."



Diane (left) with big sisters, Jan (middle) and Delores (far right)



Northrup Creek Horse Camp



Her favorite horse, Tuff on a ride on Mt Bachelor



Diane and Alan's wedding day