



Dr. Deborah Ann Silverman

August 27, 1990 - November 19, 2022

** TO VIEW THE LIVESTREAM, PLEASE SCOLL TO THE END OF THE OBITUARY **

In the morning hours of Saturday November 19, Dr. Deborah Ann Silverman, devoted wife, loving daughter, loyal friend, and amazing dog mom, passed quietly at the age of 32 after a courageous battle with breast cancer.

Growing up in Maui, Hawaii, Deborah was homeschooled before attending Seabury Hall, skipping a grade to graduate salutatorian at the age of 16. She then began her extensive academic career across the country at Drexel University, excelling through the undergraduate Biology honors program to graduate Summa Cum Laude. She worked and studied at Fox Chase Cancer Center and the National Institute of Health before attending medical school as a dual degree Md-PhD student at the UT Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences in collaboration with MD Anderson Cancer Center. A brilliant and diligent scholar, Deborah earned her PhD to become “Dr. Deb” in October 2022.

Inquisitive, ambitious, and naturally gifted, Deborah was an exceptionally

accomplished student all her life. She had a profound love of learning, asking insightful questions that she was eager to answer with innovative experimentation. Deborah was a remarkable mentor and invaluable collaborator, acknowledged and respected by some of the most prolific and promising academic scientists in her field. Throughout her extensive schooling, Deborah received numerous awards, honors, and accolades, receiving grants from the Cullen foundation, a John J. Kopchick fellowship, and the renowned NIH F30 grant to explore groundbreaking research in T-cell cancer immunotherapy. She received several prestigious publications and a featured cover story in the high impact research journal, Nature. Despite the complexity of her research, Deborah always took the time and attention to explain her work in a way most could understand and appreciate. She loved nothing more than sharing her passion for science and passing that excitement on to others.

Deborah was truly an extraordinary mix of intelligence, skill, and creativity. She was an avid reader, an accomplished creative and technical writer, and a naturally gifted artist. She expressed her imaginative mind through acrylic and watercolor painting, drawing, and ukulele. Deborah was a master chef in the kitchen, making mouths water with her signature steak techniques and renowned rack of ribs. She was also gifted with a green thumb, somehow finding time in her hectic schedule to run a successful side business propagating exotic house plants. Deborah was always on the move and loved being outdoors hiking trails, kayaking the bayou, or simply enjoying the weather with her husband and beloved fur baby, Tedward.

In only 32 short years, Deborah achieved more than a lifetime of significant achievements and generously gifted others enough smiles and lively memories to last another lifetime over. Deborah had a vivacious untamed

spirit that can never be matched. The perseverance and grace she's shown in the face of impossible challenges and grueling setbacks speaks to her tenacious character and astounding strength, which will endure as a humbling inspiration to all left in her absence. She exuded such genuine warmth and a brilliance that cannot be dimmed. Her light will live on in the hearts, minds, and stories of all those lucky to have witnessed her time here. She will forever remain so fondly remembered, abundantly loved, and unbelievably missed.

Deborah is survived by her husband Joel Olshefski, parents Peggy and Fred Silverman, sister Jennifer Varley, brother Kerry Ellis, and loyal companion Teddy.

A funeral service will be held at 12:00 noon, on Saturday, November 26, 2022 at Covenant Baptist Church, 4949 Caroline St, Houston, TX. 77004. Doors open to pay respects at 11:00 a.m. The ceremony will be live streamed for those unable to attend in person. A small reception will follow to share stories and celebrate Deborah's beautiful life.

Deborah wanted her send-off to be a joyous reflection of her life, full of warmth, love, laughter, and fond memories. Per her wishes, she is to be cremated and scattered among the mountains of Colorado which she admired so dearly.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to give.moffitt.org, and specify the fund being donated to is Dr. Deborah Silverman Fund for Triple Negative Breast Cancer.

Tribute Wall

L1

“ Precious Aloha to a “Seabury Sistah”!

Lindy Shimizu Belcher '70

Lindy Shimizu Belcher. Class of 1970 - November 29, 2022 at 04:02 PM

JS

“ Joe Schmidt lit a candle Dear Fred and Peggy. I am so very saddened hearing of the passing of your beautiful daughter Deborah. She was such a gifted and wonderful student, a strong and confident and beautiful presence and was an inspiration to all. She gave her all to every endeavor with joyful enthusiasm and accomplished so much in her short time on this Earth. I have many fond memories of her during her distinguished career at Seabury and many fond memories of both of you as well. May you experience peace and healing during this difficult time. My love to both of you, Joe Schmidt



Joe Schmidt - November 28, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ Scott and Michele Winham lit a candle We are so sorry for your loss. Deborah was an exceptional person. Kind, smart, funny-a student of life, a difference maker. Our hearts ache for Peggy and Fred who love you ferociously. Rest in peace.



Scott and Michele Winham - November 27, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AH

“ My (Our) Precious Dr Deborah Ann Silverman

I met you when you were about 9 years old.

I had “just” moved to Maui and your Mom was a Stampin’ Up Demonstrator having a workshop at the Resort where I worked. Peggy and I became instantly close/dearest friends and that always included you.

You were so beautiful, not just on the outside but also your spirit was light and beautiful. It was difficult to believe you were only 9 years old. Having been homeschooled and always around adults you were quite easy to talk to. So smart. And your sense of humor. I fell in love.

I couldn’t wait for my Husband, Rick, to meet you and sure enough, he fell in love also. He just loved talking to you for what seemed like hours.

We watched you grow up into an amazing young lady.

Then came going to high school from being homeschooled to Seabury Hall. They wanted to skip you 2 grades but Mom and Dad said no so you could experience everything. So you only skipped 1 grade. But, quite honestly, the way you breezed through that was amazing in itself. All the accomplishments, school plays including musicals; we were always blown away and so, so proud. When you graduated from high school at 16, we were in awe at your brilliance and your sweet, humble personality.

You were always a part of us.

Watching you become this incredible Woman/Physician/Scientist was just, WOW! I mean, your idea of Summer fun was working with Research Scientists at the Hospital. For you to actually become and do what you always talked about took our breath away with pride. When we heard of your illness, we were, of course, in denial and devastated. Watching “your” response and reactions to your illness actually helped us through your process.

We prayed fervently for your healing but sometimes God wants us to learn from the “whole” process and journey. Your love for all of us was so incredible!

*We love you Deborah Ann Silverman! For everything you are!
Thank you for sharing yourself with Uncle Rick and Auntie Ann!*

Thank you for loving us!

We will forever have you in our hearts and you are always a part of us!

And when the Lord calls us Home, we look forward to lots of your Hugs!!!!

Ann Arruda and Rick Heredia - November 26, 2022 at 02:40 PM

JS

“ *I was so saddened to hear of Deb’s passing. I am a childhood friend of her sister, Jennie, and I remember when Deb was born. I was volunteering in the hospital at the time and remember awaiting her birth and serving Peggy a meal during my candy-striper rounds. I also remember her as a baby and young child before the family moved to Hawaii. She brought such joy and love to her family. Please accept my deepest and most sincere condolences. You are in my thoughts and prayers.*

Jenny Almy Simon - November 26, 2022 at 12:45 PM

“ Q: What will you never forget about Dr. Deborah?

A: Two things come to mind when I think about Deb...

First, she was the new baby sister of our friend Jennie (Silverman) in our last years of high school. Jennie was the “heart” of our small friends group in high school and so being a wonderful Big Sister to Deb was going to come naturally of course. I’d like to think that Deb’s academic successes and zeal for life were partly influenced by her big sister Jennie.—These two beautiful, smart, talented, strong women held a very precious bond that only sisters have the privilege of sharing.

Second, and much later in life when Deb was interning at MDAnderson. Suddenly baby sister Deborah was now a grown woman AND future doctor! Where had the time gone?!?! It was hard to wrap my head around the fact the Jennie’s little sister was not “little” anymore, but a brilliant up-and-coming doctor! And we (my family) could not have been more grateful for this young lady and her knowledge and connections at MDAnderson in 2015. My husband has Papillary Cancer of Thyroid (since 1999) . We had just moved to Colorado Springs, CO where my husband was to finish out his career in the Air Force and his thyroid cancer had returned after an almost 5 year remission. —This particular thyroid cancer is a tricky one and after a lymph node removal surgery in January 2015, Scott’s physicians felt it might be best to get a second opinion about going forward with treatments and the like. Through my continued friendship with Jennie, Deb steps up and is instrumental with getting my husband the right specialist to talk to, see, and otherwise navigate MDAnderson...no small feat! This was a very busy young woman who took time from her own hectic schedule and made sure that my husband was seen and talked to the right doctors.—And she did so not knowing us from a whole in the wall, and not just a high school friend of her big sister, but as a cancer patient looking for answers that were difficult (at the time) to find. I’m sure Deb would have seen that as a “small” contribution, but to us it

spoke volumes about her character, about her love for medical science, and her devotion to helping people overcome the odds and put any cancer out of existence.

Today we mourn the loss of a young women who truly was going to change the world. Her memory and legacy live on through her loving family, her friends and colleagues, and the countless people that never had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Deborah. Current and future cancer patients will benefit from her time as a med student, cancer scientist, and brilliant doctor. Her family and friends will carry on her memories and see Deb in everything that brings about a smile or a good chuckle. The medical community will carry on her work and Deb will still be an important contributor in the fight against cancer.

With our heartfelt condolences to Dr. Deborah's family, friends, and colleagues.....

*Jennifer (Flynn) and Scott Price
Monument, CO*

Jennifer Price - November 26, 2022 at 11:22 AM

DB

“*Doreen Boxer lit a candle My deepest condolences. I remember Deborah as a brilliant and kind child. She was a gift to this world, and remains a treasure in the hearts of all she touched.*



Doreen Boxer - November 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SJ

“ *Sally Sefton Johnston lit a candle I have been thinking of Deborah non stop for several days now. I watched her page, hoping for signs of improvement. That seemed to dwindle, and I was crushed thinking that her fight was nearing the end.*



I taught Deborah English and Speech as well as directed her in two school productions. She was such an eager student in every class and play she performed in. She usually sat next to me, always ready to make an observation and share her curiosity about the materials we were exploring. She was a dream to have in class, always reminding me that teaching students like her made all of the hard days worthwhile. She brought so much light to all of the projects she was involved in.

I worked with her parents at Seabury Hall for several years and followed her progress as a scientist, searching for ways to work on cancer cells. Then the news of her illness was shared with me, and I felt sure that this spunky scientist would fight this nasty cancer. I kept in touch, reading her updates, and marveling at her optimism in spite of unimaginable pain and physical trauma. I felt like Deborah had become my teacher, showing me how to take something unbearable and turn it into a valiant fight.

Much love to Fred and Peggy and all who saw the light that surrounded Deborah in every moment. I am so sorry for the loss of your beautiful, magical girl. I know she is ALWAYS with you. Praying for strength and grace in the coming days.

Sally Sefton Johnston - November 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ Dr. Deb, just Deb back then, was in one of my immunology courses where we had to analyze papers and present them. She was always so well spoken and sharp. I remember telling her how she just blew me away and she was so down to earth. She just straight up told me, “This is the only class I have to take for the immunology PhD so I’m leaning in to it” (or something like that). Her smile, laugh, and enthusiasm were infections. Getting to work more closely with her through the Kopchick Fellowship made me love her more. I hope I was able to bring her the same amount of comfort she always brought me. We were both going through it and I will continue to keep her close to my heart.

Alexis Mobley - November 25, 2022 at 02:41 PM

LR

“ I have never known anyone so loved by so many people. Her heart was so open for the love of Christ not only for herself but for others. She will be watching for you and will be eager to show you around her heavenly home. Don’t disappoint her. Open up your heart to Jesus Christ the savior

Linda Richter - November 23, 2022 at 06:45 PM