



Marianne Taft Marcus

January 16, 2022

Marianne Louise Taft Marcus passed away peacefully on January 16th, surrounded by her loving family. She was born in Houston on October 25, 1932 to Robert Newell Taft and Helene Trumpold Taft. The family moved from Houston to Wichita Falls in the late 1930s, and then to New Haven, Connecticut in 1945, following the death of Marianne's father.

After undergraduate studies at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, she followed her mother's footsteps into nursing. She earned her B.S.N. from Columbia University-Presbyterian Hospital in 1955. At a nursing school mixer in 1954, she met Dr. Donald Marcus, with whom she shared 64 years of marriage, beginning in February 1958.

Marianne often said that she led different lives, or chapters. Between July 1955 and February 1958 she worked as a staff nurse and head nurse at Presbyterian Hospital. Between February 1958 and June 1959 she worked as a nursing instructor at Sibley Memorial Hospital Nursing School in Washington, D.C.

Following the birth of her first child in January 1960, she stopped nursing work

and devoted herself to providing a warm, nurturing family life. She hosted birthday and dinner parties, conducted a cooperative nursery school in the family's basement, and sewed clothing for the children and for school plays. She cultivated a garden, and enjoyed a network of friends in Scarsdale, New York, where the family lived from 1963 to 1980.

As the children grew older, her husband encouraged Marianne to return to work and fulfill her intellectual and professional potential. This was especially striking at a time when women were not generally supported in pursuing careers. In order to realize her goal of becoming a nurse educator, Marianne obtained an M.A. from Columbia University-Teachers College in 1976 and her M.Ed. from Columbia University in 1977. Between 1975 and 1980, Marianne taught nursing at Presbyterian Hospital, Herman H. Lehman College and Columbia University in New York City while raising three children.

In 1980, when Donald joined the faculty of Baylor College of Medicine, the family moved to Houston, where Marianne became part of the faculty of The University of Texas Health Science Center School of Nursing, now the UTHealth Cizik School of Nursing. There, she held several positions including Professor; Chair, Department of Nursing Systems; Director, Master of Nursing Education Track; and Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Education and Research. She earned her Ed.D. from the University of Houston in 1989.

Over her long and distinguished career, Marianne made many contributions to nursing research and education. She will be remembered most for her ground-breaking work in establishing substance abuse and addiction as an important field of study in health care. In the 1980s, the opportunity to open an

on-site clinic at the Cenikor Foundation's Houston residential rehabilitation program coincided with Marianne's qualitative doctoral research on ICU nurses. Those nurses frequently expressed contempt for their "weak-willed" patients with alcoholism or substance abuse. This experience opened her eyes to the need for a better understanding of addiction as a medical condition, rather than as a choice. Through her research, publications, and teaching, she developed effective strategies and protocols for substance abuse treatment and prevention that were incorporated into the curricula of health care schools. Inspired by the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, she applied the practice of mindfulness-based stress reduction to substance abuse recovery in therapeutic communities.

Her passion for the substance abuse field connected her to a national interprofessional network of kindred colleagues. Marianne served on the board of the Cenikor Foundation for many years, and was also a longtime active member of AMERSA (Association for Multidisciplinary Education and Research in Substance Abuse). In their tribute to her, to her, AMERSA calls Marianne a "pathfinder." Marianne's devotion to qualitative, community-based participatory research not only directly impacted project participants, but also inspired colleagues and students to pursue this type of work. Her passion lives on in this legacy and in her many publications.

Her excellence and innovation in teaching, research and collaborative projects garnered numerous grants and awards, including several federal research grants, election to The University of Texas Academy of Health Science Education, the Teachers College Nursing Education Alumni Association Hall of Fame, and as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. She also received the University of Texas Regents Outstanding Teaching Award, and

the John P. McGovern Award for Excellence in Medical Education and the David C. Lewis, MD Service to AMERSA Award, both from AMERSA. She considered her crowning achievement to be the establishment of the John P. McGovern Distinguished Professor of Addiction Nursing at the UTHealth Cizik School of Nursing, in support of her work. After Marianne's retirement as Professor Emerita in 2014, Marianne and Donald moved in 2016 to Brazos Towers at Bayou Manor, where they enjoyed becoming part of a vibrant retirement community. Recently, in recognition of her significant contributions, Marianne was interviewed by AMERSA for a podcast, and by the UTHealth Cizik School of Nursing, resulting in an article and video.

In a life punctuated by different chapters, a continuous thread was Marianne's enduring devotion to community service. Whether guiding her Girl Scout troop in the 1960s and '70s, conducting community-based research projects, or teaching a mindfulness-based meditation class for fellow Brazos Towers residents, she always found a way to contribute and make life better for those around her. An outgoing soul, she readily engaged with people, establishing immediate emotional connections in her personal and professional worlds. Her nurturing spirit paved the way for those she mentored to find their own path—from her children and grandchildren to her students and others.

Marianne will long be remembered and missed for her warmth, kindness, empathy, humility, generosity, and sense of humor and fun. Both in New York and Texas, the Marcus household was a hub for family gatherings and the children's friends, many of whom to this day remember and cherish Marianne's welcoming hospitality. Her family will miss her annual calls, when she sang "Happy Birthday" over the phone. Among her favorite things were her family of cats over the years, watching the birds in her backyard, the gift of night-blooming cereus blossoms, and classical music and Gene Autry songs.

Always interested in clothing, she had an elegant sense of style. Marianne enjoyed many international and national travel adventures, both for work and leisure. An annual highlight for many years were family vacations in New Mexico and southeastern Utah, where the landscape and culture fed her soul. As she faced her mortality, she often reflected, “I’ve had a wonderful life—wonderful marriage, wonderful family, and wonderful career.”

Marianne was preceded in death by her parents, Robert Newell Taft and Helene Tarr; her stepfather William Tarr; her brother, Luran Harris; nephew Luran Harris, Jr., and her brother-in-law, Sven Ramklint. She is survived by her husband, Dr. Donald Marcus; children, Laura Marcus Green (Steve), Susan Marcus-Mendoza (Jorge), Jim Marcus (Mia de Saint Victor); grandchildren, Donald Mendoza (Jhoana); Kathryn Torres (Jon), grandchildren Sam Marcus and Lila Marcus; great-grandson, Lucas Mendoza; sister, Newell Taft Friedman; nephews Daniel Friedman (Gail Ablow) and Andrew Friedman (Claudia and Elisa D’Ambrosia); grand-niece Sophia Friedman; and niece Patricia Ehrenzeller.

The family wish to express their profound gratitude to the staffs at the Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center and at CHI St. Luke’s Health at Baylor St. Luke’s Medical Center; the skilled and loving staff at the Brazos Towers-Bayou Manor Health Care facility; and Vantage Hospice. A memorial will be held at a future date to honor Marianne’s life.

Donations may be made in Marianne’s name to: Association for Multidisciplinary Education and Research in Substance Abuse (AMERSA), by check to AMERSA, 135 Lyndon Road, Cranston, RI 02905, or at <https://amersa.org/donate-to-amersa/>; or to the Cenikor Foundation, Attn: Thomas Spiriti,

11931 Wickchester Lane, Houston, Texas 77043, or at cenikor.org; or to the UTHealth Cizik School of Nursing, 7000 Fannin, Suite 1200, Houston, Texas 77030, or at <https://giving.uth.edu/memorial>.

A celebration of life for Donald and Marianne Marcus will be held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, March 1, 2025, at the First Unitarian Church, 5200 Fannin Street, in Houston, Texas 77004. A reception will immediately follow the service. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to RSVP to let the family know you will be joining them for the services and reception.

Tribute Wall

EC

“ Evelyn Coker lit a candle Condolences to the Marcus Family. May God continue to strengthen you with love and kindness from friends and family. Blessing! Evelyn Coker



Evelyn Coker - March 03, 2025 at 12:00 AM

RA

“ Racelyn lit a candle My deepest, most heartfelt condolences to the family of Marianne. Racelyn Ledl-Berdin



Racelyn - January 22, 2022 at 12:00 AM

ER

“ Eboni Ramm lit a candle Mrs. Marianne, thank you for sharing your insights through your writing. We at Communal Pen will indeed miss your physical presence and continue to celebrate your loving wisdom.



Eboni Ramm - January 22, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AR

“ Abigail Rawl lit a candle Sending love, thoughts, and prayers to Marianne's family during this tough time. Abigail Rawl



Abigail Rawl - January 22, 2022 at 12:00 AM