



## Stephanie Lee Borden

December 11, 1953 - June 21, 2025

It is with tremendous sorrow the family of Stephanie Lee Borden shares the news of her passing on June 21st, 2025. Stephanie was 71 years old at the time of her passing in Fort Myers, FL. She passed away peacefully and with no pain, and for that we are grateful. There could be no amount of time that would have been enough for this beautiful soul to have remained in our orbit, and we are blessed for every single second we had with her.

Stephanie was a rarity in this world, with a kindness, gentleness, empathy, and open-mindedness that radiated through her and wrapped those around her in a warm blanket. She was the epitome of “home”— the feeling of fresh made cookies and milk on a snowy Christmas Eve, the feeling of the sun rising on a lush spring morning and casting rainbow prisms through the dew drops. Her warmth was unending and she nurtured hundreds of people in this world, not just her own children and grandchildren.

She was an advocate for all humans in need. She stood up for the underdog, always, even when it was scary and difficult. She believed fiercely in justice, fairness, and decorum. She was ethical and honest at all costs and held herself to a moral code that was instilled in her by her own parents. She believed in doing what is right, all the time, whether or not someone is looking.

She was brilliant, creative, imaginative, and incredibly talented. A Mensa

member, her favorite topics included science, human rights, history, space, arts, and classic cars. Her openness and thoughtful listening skills gave her the gift of deep and meaningful conversations, where people would share experiences and feelings they had, in many cases, kept to themselves much of their lives. She greeted everyone's story with a fully open mind, reverence, and the most healing tears and hugs.

Stephanie was born on December 11, 1953, in Minneapolis, MN. She did many incredible things in her life. In 1978, Stephanie graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Elective Studies/Mass Communications from St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, MN. That began a vibrant career in journalism and radio that started as a DJ in college and rose to impressive heights including working as a news reporter, editor, and talk radio producer for Minnesota's #1 radio station, WCCO, from 1978 to 1982 with Mr. Hobbs, Boone and Erickson, Jergen Nash, and Joyce Lamont. Prior to WCCO Radio, she was a reporter and news anchor for WJON Radio in college. It was here she met Dean Spratt, her first husband and father of her firstborn, Benjamin Spratt. Before lovingly parting ways as dear friends, Stephanie and Dean enjoyed several years of marriage, both valuable members of the esteemed WCCO Radio roster during that time and devoted parents to their thriving little boy. Many years later, Stephanie would meet her second husband, Timothy Kirch, father of their daughter, Samantha Kirch (Taravella). At that time, Tim was a drug and alcohol counselor at Hazelden in Minnesota. Their 10-year marriage would take them to the warmth of Florida for a period, then to the mountains of Asheville, NC, before they would part as friends and comrades for the rest of their lives.

Following WCCO, Stephanie's entrepreneurial spirit led her to many new adventures including being an investigative journalist and crime reporter, a family and circuit civil mediator and elder care mediator, a certified aging-in-place specialist, a crime victim services practitioner, a licensed private

investigator, a volunteer guardian ad litem, domestic violence victim advocate, and crime victim support group leader. Because she was equal parts creativity and intellect, she also spent many years in music and theater— starring in productions of *Funny Girl* and *Mame* (attending family members recall she stole the show), and later in life volunteering to perform songs for residents in memory care and Alzheimer’s units under the moniker “Lady Blue.” She intentionally chose songs from the 30’s and 40’s knowing many Alzheimer’s patients retain a long-term memory for music despite losing other elements of their memory. She so loved to watch these gentle souls light up and transform to their former selves for a moment— their loved ones amazed to see they remembered each word to every song, despite having lost many other memories. She did this purely because it brought her joy to share this love and meaning with those around her.

During her colorful and noteworthy life, she did many things that showcased the power of her gentle listening skills, her curiosity, and intelligence. She interviewed the last living Physician who attended the autopsy of JFK. Additionally, while living in Asheville, NC as an investigate journalist, she covered the 5-year manhunt of federal bombing fugitive Eric Rudolph as he hid in the Appalachian Mountains. She reported the stories of grieving families suffering losses with genuine respect and empathy. She was extraordinarily gifted at this not just because of her intellect and skill, but because of her warm and nurturing soul. Anyone who met her instantly felt “This is a safe place. This is who I can trust with what is on my heart. I know this kind woman will listen, understand, and retell it fairly and in a way that will help humanity.”

While Stephanie did many inspiring things during her lifetime, what is more impressive is WHO she was. To understand who she was, think back to the early 1960’s. Stephanie was in 5th grade at a Catholic school, run by very strict nuns who demanded complete conformity. Questions were not to be

asked. Issues were not to be raised. In Stephanie's predominately white classroom, there was only one African American boy. One day in class, the seriousness of the school weighing heavy in the air, the nun referred to this boy with a derogatory racial term. 10-year-old Stephanie, her short brown hair brushing against her ears, shakily stood from her seat and looked straight ahead at her teacher. "Sister, you cannot say that," she said. "It is not right." She was taken to the principal's office for this and was punished. Likely the only time in her entire life she was ever "in trouble" for anything. But she did not care. That little boy needed an advocate, and it was her. She would not stand by and watch anyone be mistreated. Her kindness was unparalleled. Whether it was paying for a friend's travel to say goodbye to her mother in the hospital when she could not afford it (Stephanie did not even remember doing that...), sharing the Mother's Day bouquets she would receive with residents of her building, or volunteering at the Salvation Army serving meals to the homeless nearly every Thanksgiving morning, her heart swelled with pure joy when she was able to help and comfort others.

The most beautiful paradox, Stephanie was not only brilliant, ethical, and well-spoken, she was also incredibly silly, funny, and playful. With an almost childlike innocence, she would craft the most creative activities and games. One evening while her daughter, Samantha, visited her— she shared she had just gotten a massive paper towel delivery in the mail. Of course, to her, the natural thing to do was build a paper towel tower and replicate the carnival game where you knock down the milk bottles. She giggled with delight at the idea and jumped for joy when her first throw knocked down almost every single one. On another occasion, during a family gathering at her son, Ben's, house (along with Mandie, Marshal, Morgan and Samantha), Stephanie thought it would be funny to hide from the family and, probably, pop out and surprise everyone at the perfect time. Her commitment to her prank was strong as she hid in a small space between Morgan's bed and the wall. What she did not plan on was falling asleep there. She was "missing" for about an

hour while the family rode around the neighborhood on bikes looking for her in case she went on a walk. When she appeared an hour later and acted like nothing happened (but suspiciously, looked more well-rested...) everyone laughed for hours. Her children and grandchildren have enjoyed such color and vibrancy in their worlds because of her ingenuity and sense of humor. She was also a brilliant baker and cook, religiously making everything from scratch, and her family has enjoyed many batches of her famous Sloppy Joes, caramel rolls on Christmas, and her peanut blossom cookies.

Stephanie is survived by her son and firstborn, Benjamin Spratt, and her daughter, Samantha Taravella. Ben's wife, Mandie Rainwater, their children, Marshal Rainwater and Morgan Jones, and Samantha's husband, James Taravella, and their 15-month-old son, Rowan Taravella, join the ranks of those who mourn her loss. She is also survived by her sister Angela Jackson (her husband Shane Jackson and their children Winfield Jackson and Addison Jackson), her brother Daniel Borden (his wife Judy Werner), dear friend and a previous partner later in life, Chet Young, and countless cousins, aunts, and close friends, many of whom she has known and loved for decades. She is preceded in passing by her father, Richard Borden, her mother, Gloria Borden, her sister, Christine Borden, her brother, Nicholas Borden, and her beloved grandparents, aunts, and uncles— all of whom share the gene for justice and brilliance with a novel of beautiful stories of their own.

A celebration of life will be held in her honor at 11:00 AM on Sunday, July 13th, at the Shangri-La Springs 27750 Old 41 Rd., Bonita Springs, FL. Anyone who may wish to attend is welcomed. For more information, please contact 239-908-1558. In honor of her festive and vibrant spirit, it is requested all attendees please wear bright and cheerful colors. Stories will be told, songs will be sang, and her spirit will be honored.

Stephanie was the sun in the universe of so many around her— warming

them, connecting them, and centering them. Now, she is the soft pink and lilac sky that lingers after the sun bows out of view and becomes one with the horizon. She was missed beyond measure from the moment she left us. Yet, we still feel her glow and twinkle inside our hearts, a soft candle's flame lighting our path. Thank you, Mom, for being exactly who you were. We would not have changed a single perfect cell of you.

To sign her guest register or to leave online condolences please visit [www.ShikanyFuneralHome.com](http://www.ShikanyFuneralHome.com).

Arrangements are being handled by Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home Family Owned and operated Since 1978.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

JUL 13. 11:00 AM (ET)

Shangri-La Springs  
27750 Old 41 Rd  
Bonita Springs, FL 34135  
(239) 949-0749

# Tribute Wall

LK

“ Linda K. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Stephanie Lee Borden.

Linda K. - July 09, 2025 at 11:30 AM

FF

“ From the Hudson Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Stephanie Lee Borden.



From the Hudson Family - July 02, 2025 at 08:52 PM

FF

“ From the Hudson Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Stephanie Lee Borden.

From the Hudson Family - July 02, 2025 at 08:52 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Stephanie Lee Borden.



June 26, 2025 at 05:28 PM

M(

“ Stephanie was Teppie to us. She came into my life 20 years ago when I started dating Ben. She helped us move, she baby sat (although we wondered who watched who) and took the kids on fun adventures. She lived for her Children. She loved them fiercely and was happy to watch them blossom into caring fine adults. Getting the call Saturday that she was gone was shocking. As Sam described she was at peace. We had all gotten together recently, a feat more difficult than any, and it was great. She had seen Sam Thursday and Ben Friday and for that I will be forever grateful. Teppie rest easy. I will love you forever.



Mandie Rainwater (Spratt) - June 26, 2025 at 05:22 PM

SS

We're so sorry to see Stephanie has left us. We were so looking forward to seeing a lot of her while we were in Ft Myers. We loved coming here and a big reason was to see Stephanie. We were heart broken when Sam told us Stephanie had moved on to another world. Now both Ben and his sister are parent less. So sorry for your loss. All my calls and texts to Stephanie were unanswered. We miss you more than you'll know. At least now you have a good excuse for NOT GETTING BACK TO US!

sandi of Sandi & Tom. Tom worked with St - March 10 at 01:03 PM

SS

We miss you a lot!

sandi of Sandi & Tom. Tom worked with St - March 10 at 01:06 PM

WI

“ Aunt Stephenie,

*We will all miss you dearly. Your smile could light up a room as we're sure you are doing already, across the rainbow bridge.*

*We love you always,*

*Winfield and Mattie*

---

**winfield** - June 26, 2025 at 04:21 PM

JO

“ My dearest, Stephanie -

*How often did I ever call you by your name? Not at all often. To me you were Gooch (Goochie, Goocherella, Goochiemamma, etc. etc. etc.). When we met in 1993 on the set of Mame at The Players of Sarasota, you playing Agnes Gooch and me as Patrick Dennis, we had instantaneous connection. I'd rarely experienced that kind of sparkle then nor since upon a first encounter. Our friendship quickly became solid and loving and deep and - certainly - inanely delightful right up to the moment you peacefully and gracefully went on to your next journey.*

*I will miss our many Disney excursions; oh, did we have a ball!!! Our decades of marathon phone calls where we simply never ran out of things to talk about. The way we held each other's hands - literally and figuratively - to get through the good and bad of life. You were (and shall always be) a friend like no other in my life. How I miss you but am grateful for the memory OF you!*

*I feel emptiness and yet am fulfilled beyond imagination because I get to say I knew you. And, that my darling friend, is a gift I cherish now and forever.*

*Go with God and keep your bright light gleaming -  
Johnnie*

---

**Johnnie** - June 26, 2025 at 02:18 PM