



# Elizabeth "Betsy" E. Lamberton

January 26, 1948 - September 16, 2023

Betsy Lamberton, humorist, educator, and entrepreneur dies at 75

Talk to anyone about Betsy, and they will immediately mention her quick wit and honest humor. From lightning-fast answers to Jeopardy questions to using a precise "25 cent" vocabulary word in casual conversation or in her regular, voracious reading of a book in one sitting, she demonstrated her insatiable curiosity and capacity for wonder.

Betsy was born, Elizabeth Ella Smalley, at the leading edge of the baby boom on January 26, 1948, the only child of William and Geneva Mae Crane Smalley in Bound Brook NJ. She spent idyllic childhood days with the family dogs and the neighborhood kids riding bikes and playing in the brook behind their home. Her passion in flowers and plants was nurtured by her next-door neighbors, who had no children; they taught her to care for their rare orchid collection and trained her in the basics of working in a greenhouse.

Betsy met the love of her life and husband of 55 years, Harold Edwin "Ed" Lamberton, in college at SUNY Cobleskill where they were both studying agricultural related fields. Betsy faced gender discrimination as one of only three women in her agronomy classes and left school to follow Ed to Delaware Valley College where she continued to work towards her associates degree as he wrapped up his bachelor's. She thrived in classes there and ended up working as a seed analyst for a government lab in NJ.

The Lambertons married on Valentines Day 1970 in the middle of an ice storm in NJ.

Betsy and Ed moved to Mill Point NY and co-ran a dairy farm alongside the Schoharie Creek where she loved to forage for asparagus and fiddleheads and taught her husband how to earn his motorcycle license while she cared for the young stock. Betsy became an integral and respected member of the town of Florida community. She and her husband dedicated much of their time and energy to the Florida Reformed Church and served in many leadership capacities and developed close lifelong friendships.

Betsy also worked with Cooperative Extension as a Master Gardener, helping folks learn to cook, can, forage, and care for their families. Continuing her love of flowers, she worked at Mary & Belles Flower Shop in Amsterdam, NY where she quickly picked up flower arranging and became encyclopedic about flowers and plants. She used this knowledge at the Minaville Greenhouse planting seedlings and tending to the growing plants.

Shortly after the birth of her daughter, Betsy began her training as a clown and began Marvelous Mondays at the church, which provided teens with joyful Christian education through clowning. As Shrinking Violet, the Clown, she also provided entertainment at celebrations with balloon sculptures, face painting, and jokes. Shrinking Violet soon became popular around town for flower and balloon delivery. She and her clowning partners had a traveling show they performed, and in 1984 they performed a two-week run at the Fonda Fair. The performance included her daughter Joy, who nods to this early performance run as the start of her career in theatre.

While working on the farm, Betsy had an additional job at Lou's Supermarket in Amsterdam, NY. There she met the Fathers of St. Mary's Church who then hired her to be their cook at the rectory, which allowed her daughter to attend St Mary's Institute. She quickly self-taught the basics of French cooking and helped the rectory entertain visiting dignitaries. During this time, she was also a short order cook at Ted's Diner in Amsterdam, NY.

In 1985, after selling the farm, Betsy and Ed opened Dairy Frost on the corner of Rtes. 29 and 30 in Vail Mills, NY. With hard work, ingenuity, and an eye for coming food trends they made a little ice cream shop a hub of community life. Over 35 years people chose to celebrate engagements, take prom pictures, host impromptu post-game celebrations and commiserations at the Dairy Frost Gazebo, which Betsy lovingly landscaped with lush hanging baskets and plantings. Over the years, Betsy and Ed developed deep friendships with many of the regulars and cherished their ties to the community.

A trendsetter and an early adopter of technology, she was a self-taught librarian and computer teacher who worked for Broadalbin-Perth Schools for more than 20 years. She started off working as a part-time recess aide and before-care helper until she was asked if she'd be interested in working in the library. Though she didn't learn to read with ease until a high school speed reading class, books were one of her favorite things in the world. She jumped at the chance to work in the library and unlock this joy for others. There she was asked if she'd be comfortable working with something new - a computer terminal. Betsy was a natural with computers and with encouragement from colleagues she was

supported by the district with professional development and went on to help establish the elementary media center and later the high school computer lab, earning her associates degree along the way. For many students in Broadalbin-Perth, she greeted them with picture books in first grade and helped them learn coding and do web research as juniors and seniors. She cherished her Facebook connections that allowed her to see how “her kids” were doing. She was so proud of them.

Betsy supported, cajoled, encouraged, and cheered on students and Dairy Frost employees to prioritize their passions, get good educations, and never forget to give back to their community. Even though she only had one biological daughter, she loved and inspired many young women in her community to dream big, work hard, and never let anyone stop them from believing in themselves. The ripples of her good works continue on in them.

Betsy continued to thrive for over a decade after being diagnosed with Neuroendocrine Tumors (after being mis-diagnosed for nearly a decade before that). Very few people knew she struggled with the impacts of a chronic slow-moving cancer and endured monthly shots and an intensive treatment in CT in 2018. As was her way, she befriended staff and nurses who all remarked on her wit and humor even under difficult circumstances.

For over 40 years, Betsy and Ed traveled to Florida for the Daytona Speedweeks. In the early years, Joy and Betsy would travel all over Florida on adventures while Ed went to the Daytona 500. They traveled to Key West for the famed sunset view. While camping in the Keys in the mid 80s, Betsy and Joy became life-long parrot-heads and, over the years, went to several Jimmy Buffet shows together. In recent years, Betsy enjoyed the ocean views and the opportunity to ride motorcycles in the sunshine and enjoy as much seafood and good times as she could handle with their Florida “crew”. She and Ed also had the opportunity to travel with friends to Ireland on music and history tours and to Hawaii with their close friends. Betsy and Ed recently bought a boat and a family lodge in their retirement and began to deeply enjoy “Lake Life” on the Sacandaga.

Betsy is survived by her loving husband, Ed, a daughter, Joy, and her husband, Nicholas Arcolano. She is also survived by her devoted grandchildren, Maxwell and Geneva (Stormey) Arcolano of Watertown, MA with whom she shared cooking and baking, a love of murder mystery shows, and telling jokes and punning. Her steadfast family also includes her husband's siblings who were the siblings she never had as a child, Marlene and Jim Heath of South Carolina, Debbie and Joe Ingalls of South Carolina, Shelli Lamberton of NY, and Gary and Bev Lamberton of NY as well as all of their children, her nieces and nephews, and their children. She leaves behind an innumerable impact on the

friends, family, and students who enjoyed the warmth of her love and the genuine straight-talk and wry understanding of Betsy's advice.

Community, Friends, and Family are invited to the Robert M. Halgas Funeral Home, Inc. 111 County Highway 106 (Corner of Route 29 & Black Street), Johnstown on Saturday, September 23, 2023, for a celebration of Betsy's life from 1-3pm. A short community service will begin at 3pm with Rev. Dr Bonnie Orth, officiating. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Broadalbin Ecumenical Food Pantry, a distribution site for the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY.

In Betsy's memory, make yourself a piping hot cup of tea with a splash of milk, water your plants, make yourself a yummy snack, and settle down with a good book for a little while.

# Previous Events

## Calling Hours

SEP 23. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Halgas Funeral Home  
111 County Highway 106  
Johnstown, NY 12095  
(518) 883-5323  
debbie@halgasfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.halgasfuneralhome.com/>

## Memorial Service

SEP 23. 3:00 PM (ET)

Halgas Funeral Home  
111 County Highway 106  
Johnstown, NY 12095  
(518) 883-5323  
debbie@halgasfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.halgasfuneralhome.com/>

# Tribute Wall

SE

“ *Summers in Summerville and Uncle Ray's farm, Long may she run.*

Shawn Early - January 09, 2024 at 09:46 AM

JB

“ *Ed ...we are saddened to learn of your loss. Betsy certainly touched so many lives and her legacy and accomplishments are remarkable. Sending our condolences to you and Joy.*

*Judy and Jack*

JUDY BROOKMAN - September 27, 2023 at 09:06 AM



“ *A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Elizabeth "Betsy" E. Lamberton.*

September 23, 2023 at 10:34 AM

RC

“ *Ed, I went thru the Bridgewater N.J. school system with Betsy and became good friends with her. She certainly kept everyone smiling with her wit and humor....such a gift not many possessed.. This woman touched so many lives. She will be missed but never forgotten. Randy Cunningham*

Randy Cunningham - September 23, 2023 at 08:02 AM

AD

“ *Betsy was a wonderful, kind and generous woman. Always willing to give her time to help students.*

Anne Dietrich - September 23, 2023 at 04:57 AM

VV

“ *Valerie Vanantwerp lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth "Betsy" E. Lamberton*



valerie vanantwerp - September 22, 2023 at 09:59 PM

MH

“ Ed, and family. We are so sorry to hear of Betsy passing.  
What a remarkable lady she was.  
God Bless you all.  
Mary, Joe Herba

Mary Herba - September 22, 2023 at 05:54 PM

SR

“ I am so very sorry for your loss; Betsy was a delightful woman.

Sandra Riter - September 22, 2023 at 05:16 PM

JV

“ Living in the Town of Florida for 46 years, our paths crossed with Betsy and Ed.  
She always had us laughing. She was a genuine, loving, wonderful person and  
will be missed by all. Please accept our deepest sympathy. Jacki and Roger  
Vogel

Jacki Vogel - September 22, 2023 at 08:37 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of  
Elizabeth "Betsy" E. Lamberton.



September 21, 2023 at 02:27 PM

MS

“ Dear Ed, Joy and family,  
May your memories of Betsy be a comfort for you and may her life be a guide to  
us all.  
We will be celebrating and honoring her with too few shared family gatherings,  
our many joyful stories pictures and daily caring for others and definitely watering  
our plants !  
Lovingly cousins  
Peggy and Phyllis

Margaret Steinberg - September 21, 2023 at 12:50 PM

LH

“ Loretta Hoyt lit a candle in memory of Elizabeth "Betsy" E. Lamberton



Loretta Hoyt - September 20, 2023 at 09:56 PM

VF

“ I'm very sorry for your loss of Betsy. She was a one of kind wonderful person. She spread her joy of life to everyone. I enjoyed her presence at Broadalbin-Perth School. The students and staff loved her.

Valerie Fiorillo - September 20, 2023 at 09:06 PM

JK

“ We are so sorry to hear of Betsy's passing what a wonderful woman.

Jane konik - September 20, 2023 at 08:12 PM

MV

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss.  
Rob and Melinda VanPatten

Melinda VanPatten - September 20, 2023 at 06:58 PM

JL

“ Eddy. Joy & Family

Our deepest sympathy to you. Betsy lit up a room with her great bubbly personality. We enjoyed our visit with both of you this summer.

Love Uncle Jim & Aunt Bev

james lamberton - September 20, 2023 at 06:41 PM

CP

“ So many memories - Alton and Carole Palmer send our thoughts and prayers to Ed and family. A real special lady.

Carole and Alton Palmer - September 20, 2023 at 03:49 PM