

Barbara Stumpf Adams Obituary

In Loving Memory of Barbara Stumpf Adams

October 3, 1951 – February 17, 2025



Barbara Stumpf Adams passed away peacefully on the morning of February 17, 2025. Though her passing was quiet, she was surrounded in spirit by the love of her family and friends, who will carry her memory forward with gratitude for the life she lived and the impact she made.

Born on October 3, 1951, in Springfield, Ohio, Barbara was the only daughter of Ellen and Robert Stumpf. Her early years took her from Springfield to Rome, NY and Framingham, MA, before settling in the Washington DC area. She attended George Marshall High School and later Bridgewater College, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in English. A year studying abroad in Strasbourg, France, ignited her love for French language and culture, making her bilingual for much of her life.

She began her career teaching 8th grade English in Warrenton, VA, before transitioning to the Defense Communications Agency, where she met David R. Adams. They married in 1977 and welcomed two sons, Robert (Ben) and Greg, in 1980 and 1983. As a Foreign Service wife supporting David's career at the United Nations and USAID, she lived abroad in Dhaka, Bangladesh; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; and Guatemala City, where she taught kindergarten at Colegio Maya.

In 1991, she and her family returned from Guatemala to Herndon, VA, where she taught French to students from kindergarten through 8th grade at Nysmith School. After her divorce in 1994, she pursued a Master's degree from the University of Virginia and went on to teach 8th grade English at Herndon and Rachel Carson Middle Schools until her retirement in 2015. Over 42 years in education, she touched the lives of countless students and colleagues, inspiring a love of literature, poetry, and the importance of proper grammar. She believed words had power, stories had meaning, and every student had a voice worth hearing.

Above all, Barbara was a devoted and loving mother to her two sons. She poured her heart into giving them a childhood every kid dreams of, and shaped them into empathetic, morally grounded men who strive to do the same for their children.

In early 2020, Barbara was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia with primary progressive aphasia, a cruel disease that gradually robbed her of her ability to find words, to express herself, and, ultimately, to speak. For a lifelong English teacher who spent

decades instilling in others a love for language, this loss was particularly devastating. Even as words failed her, her warmth, wit, and kindness endured.

She faced her illness with grace and courage, moving first to Independent Living at Harmony in Chantilly, then to Independent and Assisted Living at BrightView Fair Oaks. Throughout her illness, she was surrounded by the unwavering support of her wonderful and loyal friends Sue Woodruff and Jean Silverwood who visited often and took her to countless outings and doctor's appointments, and her dear cousin David Stumpf who made many trips from Ohio to help her move and ease her transition to full-time care.

Barbara was also dedicated to advancing scientific research, much like her father, Robert Stumpf, who was a participant in the landmark Framingham Heart Study. Inspired by his contribution and motivated by her desire to spare others her same fate, Barbara took part in a two-year Phase 3 double-blind, placebo-controlled study for a drug aimed at delaying or even halting the onset of frontotemporal dementia (FTD). Accompanied by her rotating care team—her sons and her dear friends Sue and Jean—she traveled monthly to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, contributing invaluable data to a study that will help future patients live longer, fuller lives.

She is survived by her two sons, Ben and Greg, her daughters-in-law, Crystal and Rachel, and her four cherished grandchildren, Jackson (13), Max (10), Mia (8), and Owen (6), of Aldie and Clifton VA. She also leaves behind her nieces and nephews Ryan, Tyler, Tifani, and Cody Adams; Paige Stumpf Caven; Rick and Adam Stumpf; Greg Rogers; Carrie McGuire and Lindsay Henderson, as well as her grand-nieces and nephews Hazel, Evelyn and Keith Adams and Ella Poston; James, Declan, and Maddie Caven; and Morgan, Megan, and Nick Stumpf; and a great-grandnephew Easton Krebehenne.

Her legacy lives on in the generations of students she inspired, the stories she shared, and the family and friends she loved deeply. A celebration of her life is planned at Adams-Green Funeral Home in Herndon, VA on Sunday March 9 with visitation at 10am and a service at 11am, and a reception to follow at a nearby venue. Her ashes will be interred at the Chestnut Grove Cemetery in Herndon, VA at a later date.

Donations can be made in her memory to the Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration <https://www.theaftd.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/> or the Johns Hopkins University Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences (<https://secure.jhu.edu/form/psych>