



Judge Nancy Smith Stephenson

April 28, 1956 - April 1, 2020

Judge Nancy Smith Stephenson, 63, of Albany died Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at her home in Albany from cardiac issues complicated by Covid-19.

Private family graveside services will be held. A celebration of her life will be held at a later date at Albany First United Methodist Church.

A native of Tifton, Georgia, Judge Stephenson was the fifth of six children of Dr. William T. Smith and Cecilia Travis Smith. She was born on April 28, 1956, attending public school in Tift County. She attended the University of Georgia and the University of Georgia School of Law and was very proud to be a “Double Dawg.” Upon receiving her J.D. in 1981, she briefly worked for a legal publishing company in Atlanta before moving to Albany where two of her brothers had established medical practices. Judge Stephenson started her legal career in Albany as a staff attorney for Georgia Legal Services before moving to private practice with John Salter and Walter Kelly. She later became the first full time female assistant district attorney for the Dougherty Judicial Circuit. In 1992, she discovered her true calling in life, running for and being elected Probate Judge of Dougherty County, a position she has held without opposition for 27 years. Blessed with the heart of a servant, she loved nothing better than being able to assist families through both happy and difficult times. She treated everyone with equal dignity in her Court.

Judge Stephenson was a faithful member of Albany First United Methodist Church and a regular member of the New Horizons Sunday School Class. She was a member of Mended Hearts and The Albany Town Committee of the

National Society of the Colonial Dames of America. She served on numerous local civic boards over the past thirty years.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Dr. William T. Smith and Cecilia Travis Smith and her in-laws, Harry H. Stephenson, Jr. (Margarett) and Kathryn Elizabeth "Snooky" Stephenson and one brother, Gordon Burns Smith.

Survivors include her loving husband of 33 years, Judge John M. Stephenson; two sons, John Mark Stephenson, Jr. of Portland, OR and William Harry Stephenson of New York City; her siblings, Dr. Bruce Alexander Smith (Mary Jane) of Lake Oconee, Georgia, Dr. Livingston Travis Smith (Cheryl) of Lutz, Florida, Dr. Christopher Campbell Smith (Sissy) of Albany and Dr. Cecilia McKay of Portland, OR. She also leaves behind a brother-in-law, J. Scott Stephenson, a sister-in-law, Anna Habersham Smith of Savannah and numerous nieces and nephews all of whom she dearly loved. Judge Stephenson's life was enriched by many dear friendships, all of whom were cherished, but a special thank you to Dr. Kay Kitchens, her dear friend and doctor who saw her through many cardiac issues beginning in 2004.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be sent to your favorite charity, The Maggie Joe Hogg Alzheimer Care Center, or to Albany First United Methodist Church. Because Judge Stephenson also tested positive for Covid-19, he will not be able to receive visitors at this time.

Kimbrell-Stern Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Tribute Wall



“ *Sorry I am late to this post. Nancy was our chorus accompanist under the direction of Susan Beck at Tift County High School. She was talented (accompanists are a special gift) and so very kind. We all loved her.*

Donna Hellwig Rocker - June 04, 2023 at 01:34 PM



“ *Judge Nancy Smith Stephenson*

May 22, 2023 at 10:29 AM



“ *Judge Nancy Smith Stephenson*

December 24, 2022 at 02:54 AM



“ *I was soooo sad to hear of the loss of Judge Stephenson last week when I was home visiting my mom. I never met her personally but she helped me with a probate issue after my father's death a few years ago and I kept the note of encouragement that she sent me. I felt her compassion in every email that we exchanged.*

Jennifer Fountain - November 30, 2021 at 11:27 AM



“ *Elena Taylor lit a candle in memory of Judge Nancy Smith Stephenson*



Elena Taylor - April 13, 2021 at 07:16 PM

VM

“ *The world's a darker place without her light.*

vic miller - April 16, 2020 at 12:43 PM

RM

“ *I am friend from long long ago -- and haven't spoken with John or Nancy since 2003. My husband and I just happened to look in the Albany obituaries as we still have some friends there and were concerned about them with what we were seeing in the news about Albany. I was a young lawyer who worked briefly at John's law firm, and then eventually my family and I moved to North Carolina. I'm not sure how I became friends with Nancy. We and a few other women formed a book club, and we thought it was an original idea because it wasn't a thing back then. I remember Nancy's wit, clarity, and actually, some direct quotes she made about her faith. I recently recalled them as I tragically lost my mother days before Nancy passed way. Nancy's comments came back to me and were a comfort. Here's a funny thing about Nancy and how she managed to stick with me all these years. After each of my three children were born, she sent me several certified birth certificates (she was the issuing probate court judge!) Sure enough I used them throughout these many years for each child, from school enrollments to getting passports. Nancy being brilliant again. I just wanted to share that she made a lasting impression on me. I can't imagine the pain your family must be enduring right now, and we will keep you in our thoughts and prayers. Robin (and Mark) McCollough*

Robin A. McCollough - April 11, 2020 at 07:30 PM

TA

“ Tammy lit a candle in memory of Judge
Nancy Smith Stephenson



tammy - April 08, 2020 at 12:25 AM

TA

So sorry to hear about this My prayers are with family and friends

Tammy - April 08, 2020 at 12:26 AM

JP

Dear John and your large, loving family,

I remember, so well, when you and Nancy married. You were so excited to marry her on Valentine's Day as you said she was your "special Valentine" whom you loved so dearly. I believe the year was 1987 because I was pregnant with Allison at the time. Nancy is (and I say is because she is still alive, just not on this earth) a lovely lady; gentle, kind, and soft. I know you will miss her terribly until you meet again in Heaven. Blessings to you, John, as you feel the arms of your loved ones and the Heavenly loved one, surround you. May your memories warm your heart as you travel through this.

*In Christ's Love,
Janet Pepper (Ginder)*

Janet Pepper - April 10, 2020 at 08:29 AM

AB

“ John and family,
My thoughts and prayers have been with you since I learned of Nancy's passing. Having known her since the mid-80s, now I truly felt like I knew an angel that was just temporarily here on earth. She was a blessing to work with, to be with and just simply in every way. Praying for comfort, peace and healing for you in this time.
Anne Bishop

Anne Bishop - April 07, 2020 at 11:01 AM

JW

“ I was heartbroken to hear of Nancy's passing. She had a calm spirit and a warm personality. We became good friends and could talk for hours. Each time we would talk about the Albany Community or other subjects, I could see and feel the passion she had and how she wanted Albany to be bigger, better and brighter for all. There is no doubt that her calm demeanor and spirit will be missed in Albany. John, I Pray for you and your family.
Rep. John White (Retired)

John White - April 06, 2020 at 08:46 PM

KC

“ John, Mark, Will, and family members,
Nancy will be remembered for her wit, her love for Christ, her love for her family and friends. She could always find humor in any and all situations.

She will be missed, but she has everyone laughing in Heaven!!

*Love you all,
Kate Cox*

kate cox - April 06, 2020 at 07:06 PM

SS

“ I was so deeply saddened to hear of Nancy's passing. She was beloved, kind, generous, witty, and a great UGA fan! There is no doubt, she'll be missed by everyone who know her personally and professionally. My love to all who mourn her and condolences to John and the boys.
Suzanne Stern

Suzanne Stern - April 06, 2020 at 04:29 PM



“ My condolences to Nancy's family. A truly kind woman. She will be missed.

Betty Rehberg - April 04, 2020 at 07:27 PM

PM

“ John and boys:
Nancy Stephen
son was an icon in the world of great leaders! She was smart, witty, caring and so sincere in everyway. She was a fabulous probate judge.
Albany was so lucky to have her for many years in the position she served so well.
My heart is broken for you all, and her brothers and sister-in-laws.... We were fortunate to have her at WIN in January, and she, actually, spoke at that meeting, and everyone there loved her words.
Know you have many, many friends who are thinking about you during this awful time we are facing.....Know we love you and you are all in our prayers and thoughts.

Patsy Martin

Patsy Martin - April 03, 2020 at 08:46 PM

RS

“ Nancy Smith Stephenson. *God, Family, Honor, Duty, Devotion, Love, Respect, Commitment, Caring, Courage, Passion, Admiration.* A fine example of a life well lived. Flipping through the pages of my memory I remember Nancy as my smart, fun loving cousin in the other Smith family who I always looked forward to seeing when the Robley Smith family visited the Bill Smith family. Nancy and Celie will always have a special place in my heart. I remember one time at the old Country Club swimming pool, I had apparently done something to offend Chris and he was in the process of drowning me. I had not been up out of the water for a breath in a couple of minutes. Nancy saw that I was turning a light shade of blue and she knocked him off me. (Love ya Chris!) Thanks Nancy!

Another time, I was coming up on my High School graduation. Uncle Bill and Nancy came over. *Bad Timing!* Uncle Bill wanted to give me a set of golf clubs for graduation. However, when they drove up in the driveway at the house, I was in the process of making a home made smoke bomb and had just accidentally detonated it in the utility storage room just when they were driving up. So I locked my brother Greg in the room and stepped out into the carport to greet Uncle Bill and Nancy. Uncle Bill gave me the golf clubs and told me how proud of me he was. I said thank you but I am not feeling so well at the moment and I really need to go. Nancy noticed that smoke was roiling out from beneath the utility room door and hooked Uncle Bill by the arm and said " Dad, we really need to leave!" Thanks for trying Nancy, but I could not clear the smoke in time. Some one called the fire dept and next thing I know there is fire trucks and police every where! In retrospect, I think that was the last straw for my Dad. (By the way, Greg did survive). The day I turned 17, he took me to the U.S. Navy recruiter's and said "Where do I sign, he is now yours!" High school was a very difficult time in my life. Nancy would always go out of her way to encourage me and talk to me and be a friend. I looked up to her because she was pretty, smart and popular.

I remember that I had just come back from overseas and I received an invitation to attend Nancy and John's wedding. She said that Miss Ann had told her that I had been deployed and that I could

probably not come. When I received the invitation, I put in a leave chit. No way was I not going. What a beautiful wedding. Nancy told me that she was proud that I had worn my Navy dress blues to her wedding.

Over the years, we kind of lost touch with each other. I get it now. Life happens. But sometimes, like now, when you lose someone who is really special, it reminds me that I really need to make an effort to let those people in my life know that I care and that I Love them. Thank you Nancy. I love you. And I will see you again one day on that distant shore.

Robley

Robley Smith - April 03, 2020 at 08:23 PM

GA

“*Judge Nancy Stephenson was the best. She was a friend to me in so many ways and I loved her dearly. John my condolences to you and your sons. This is so hard to write these words, because I just cant believe she is actually gone. She was so sweet to me when my house burned down in 1998. She will be missed so much. My heart hearts such a beautiful soul. Working at the Doco Courthouse for 20 years, I would always go into her office and chat and every time she was always glad to see me. RIP my dear friend , we love you , but God loved you best,*



Gloria Anderson - April 03, 2020 at 08:04 PM

MV

Our sweet Nancy. I am so, so sad. There's so much to say: Nancy and I started out as new mothers and close friends in our neighborhood together. We babysat for each other's babies and on one noteworthy day, she dropped off the boys with me on her way to an important job interview; for the position of Probate Judge. Love to John and the boys, and I know how deeply Bruce and Chris (to name only a few) are missing their beloved sister. And a thankful message to our dear physician, Kay Kitchen. Margaret (Moss) Van Vliet, Denver Colorado.

Margaret (Moss) Van Vliet - April 04, 2020 at 12:57 PM

RF

“ *Thank you for your years of service. You will be greatly missed the Fields Fields family.*

Ray Fields - April 03, 2020 at 06:03 PM

SB

“ *She was a God send for my husband and me in obtaining emergency guardianship and then guardianship and conservator for my husband's step-father. Her decision prevented a situation that would have been disastrous for many people. We had heard nothing but good things about her, but in May of 2016, we got to experience that goodness first hand. I'm sure she will be greatly missed.*

Susan B Bateham - April 03, 2020 at 04:55 PM

CS

“ Dear John & Sons

I am so sorry to here about Nancy.

You all have been in my prayers and will continue to pray for healing.

I was so shocked to see this and want you to know that Nancy was very special to me and also my Mom. When you two married it was like she had been our lifelong friend as you have been John.

God Bless You!!

Cathy Shaw

Cathy Shaw - April 03, 2020 at 02:22 PM

SC

For the family of The Honorable Judge, wife ,mother,sister and friend I will miss our talks. When we worked together at the court house, when she presided over a court case for my family, the support she gave to victims of crime. She was always there. When her brother Chris did my breast surgery he told me his sister was blowing up his phone to see how I was. He said I haven't even started yet. We all went to church together and and Nancy always had that beautiful smile and kind words for those she met. I have talked to Nancy several times since moving to Charleston. I will truly miss these talks. Love and prayers for her family and friends

God bless you

Sybil Collins

Sybil Collins - April 04, 2020 at 11:51 AM

CS

“ Dear John & Boys,
The knowledge that others share your grief does nothing to lessen your own, but know that it is true that many many people knew, respected and loved Judge Nancy. She set a high standard for judicial conduct, fairness, compassion and common sense. She was a dear friend who always had an open door to talk over questions on Probate law. Dougherty County has lost a major asset in the court house. We pray for John's quick recovery as well but know that we are praying for God's comfort in this time of loss.
Clayton & Jan Smith

Clayton Smith - April 03, 2020 at 02:06 PM

SK

“ John, I'm so sorry for your loss. Nancy was a lovely lady and well loved in the community. I've been honored to have known her and you. God be with you. My deepest condolences

Sharon Kromschroeder

sharon kromschroeder - April 03, 2020 at 12:27 PM

JG

“ *To the Stephenson Family,
We have truly lost a dear soul and angel.
Nancy was a blessing to our parents and to
all our family. During legal probate of our
parents estate, Nancy put down everything
she was doing to assist in the document completion that was
essential to set up an estate for our family. She was so kind and
generous. I spoke to over over the last few years several times to
gain clarity on estate matters and renew probate documents and I
always looked forward to talking to her I and enjoyed our
conversations as she knew our family well.*



*We share in your loss of Judge Nancy and she will be deeply
missed.*

*Giovingo Family
Gina, Jan, Sal and Tony*

J.L. Giovingo - April 03, 2020 at 10:34 AM

LC

“ *Dear John, I am so sorry. Nancy was such a lovely and gracious
lady. I am privileged to have known her. Please know that I am
holding you close in my heart. May her memory be a blessing. Love
Lizanne.*

Lizanne Clay - April 03, 2020 at 10:27 AM

DS

“ John, There are no words to express how the loss of Nancy has impacted our community and myself! Nancy was a selfless person and showed her compassion for people in a very personal way, everyone who knew her loved her! Her dry sense of humor, was one of the things I will always remember about her. She was so funny!!! Please know that you and the boys are in my thoughts and prayers, and you know Nancy is with her Lord and Savior! Love and peace to you all!
Debbie Sutton



Debbie Sutton - April 03, 2020 at 10:24 AM

JB

“ Jerry & Ginny Barnes lit a candle in memory of Judge Nancy Smith Stephenson



Jerry & Ginny Barnes - April 03, 2020 at 08:32 AM

DP

“ We are all mourning the loss of an incredible, witty, bright woman. John, you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. Dimi and Thomas

Dimi Pace - April 03, 2020 at 12:45 AM

GR

“ My deepest sympathies to John and the boys. I will pray that God will bring you all comfort and peace in knowing Nancy is with our Heavenly Father and her loved ones who have gone on before. She truly was the most kind and gentle soul of anyone I've ever known. She will surely be missed by everyone who ever had the pleasure of knowing her.

GINA GRIFFIS (USDC, retired) - April 02, 2020 at 09:54 PM

JA

“ So sorry to hear the news. She was a very nice Lady. The family is in my thoughts and prayers.
Jimmy Andros

James Andros - April 02, 2020 at 08:59 PM

MM

“ Our World lost a Brilliant light....

Mary Day McGee - April 02, 2020 at 08:55 PM

AB

“ Nancy will be forever missed Such a warm caring, brilliant and witty woman. Jeff and I always said that Nancy is the nicest person we know. We have lost a dear, dear friend. Our prayers are with John and the boys.

Anita Bell - April 02, 2020 at 08:19 PM

DM

“ *Such sparkling wit and kindness! The twinkle and smile after a dry observation. Years ago there was a criminal who shared my name. When that person was arrested, Nancy left me a message offering bail money if I needed it. She was wonderful in so many ways, and I will miss her so very much.*

Dawn Mann

Dawn Mann - April 02, 2020 at 06:10 PM

SG

Nancy is responsible for allowing Margaret Jo's trust to be able to build the ALZHEIMERS Outreach Center! What a blessing this facility will be to so many just as Nancy was a blessing to Maggie and us. She will be missed terribly! Prayers to John and the boys. With loving thoughts Susan and Phil

Susan Greene - April 02, 2020 at 06:49 PM

GR

John and family, Nancy was a star and will always be remembered as such. She helped me on many occasions handling family situations. I would like to thank your family for sharing such a great person. God bless you and your family. Glenn Reynolds

Glenn Reynolds - April 03, 2020 at 02:13 PM

JC

“ *John,
I was informed today of the loss of your wife. I was so sorry to hear that and know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Take care of yourself.*

Love, Janet Guillebeau Carter

Janet Guillebeau Carter - April 02, 2020 at 05:28 PM

BM

“ Sincere condolences to Nancy's family. Such a kind, lovely, intelligent lady. She helped me many times over the years and was so nice to talk to. It was always a joy and a pleasure to speak with her. My prayers go out to Scott and John and her whole family. Particular prayers for John's health. Such a loss to them and the whole community.

Betsy Bradley McGuire - April 02, 2020 at 04:48 PM

JS

TY Betsy!

J. Scott Stephenson - April 05, 2020 at 02:36 PM

WE

“ John, I am sorry for your tremendous loss. I wish you good health and pray you know you are not alone in grief as well as disbelief.

I have long admired how humble, yet witty, Nancy was especially when I sought her expertise on crazy and unprecedented probate issues.

I will cherish her memory as a bright, vibrant public servant. She gave all do that others would have peace.

Finally, she delivered a beautiful prayer at Melanie's swearing in at Bill's bedside at Phoebe on rather short notice. I will always remember her comfort to our family in a time of celebration dulled by illness and death. She was unique.

William H. Gregory II Esq. - April 02, 2020 at 04:26 PM

JB

“ I will miss this witty, smart lady! She was always so helpful every time I called on her.

R.I.P., Nancy & sympathy & prayers to the family.

Juli R. Bruner

Juli R. Bruner - April 02, 2020 at 02:45 PM



“ I am honored to have been in Judge Nancy Stephenson's presence on several occasions. It was a delightful encounter each and every time. May the Stephenson and Smith Families find peace in knowing your love one was adored and respected by a multitude of people.

*Lt. Shirley Adams
Dougherty County Sheriff's Office*

Shirley Cba - April 02, 2020 at 02:39 PM



BP

“ Brenna Patnaude lit a candle in memory of Judge Nancy Smith Stephenson

Brenna Patnaude - April 02, 2020 at 01:16 PM



JH

Nancy was a bright light in our world. She was a wonderful, caring person who possessed so many of the qualities that we would ,all like to have. Nancy was the epitome of a gracious lady! She will be missed!

Jane Hill - April 03, 2020 at 07:25 PM

DB

“ *My deepest sympathies to the Stephenson family. Judge Nancy Stephenson was a great example of a servant leader. Her kind sensitivity & professional mannerism was a comfort to the many people she helped through the Probate Office. She was one of the best local leaders we have. Her positive leadership will be missed. Kindest personal regards, Deb B*

Deb Blanchard - April 02, 2020 at 12:15 PM