



Elaine Retberg Shetler

JUN 26, 1942 - FEB 20, 2026



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Elaine Retberg Shetler

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Elaine Retberg Shetler, 83, longtime resident of Sterling, VA, passed away on February 20th at Heritage Hall in Leesburg. She was born on June 26th, 1942 in South Haven, Michigan to Louis and Verna Retberg, the 2nd of 6 children. She attended South Haven High School where she excelled at academics and played saxophone in the marching band. She was proud to attend the University of Michigan where she studied Biology. Upon marrying her husband of over 50 years, Stanwyn Shetler, she joined him in his move to the Washington, DC area when he received employment at the Smithsonian Institution. She completed her degree at the University of Maryland and was briefly employed at the Smithsonian. Elaine joined Stanwyn on his international adventures and assisted his fieldwork in the wildernesses of Alaska and Siberia.

In 1970, Elaine and Stanwyn adopted their son, Stephen, followed by their daughter Lara in 1972. She committed herself to the raising of her two children and continued supporting her husband's scientific research, including material collaboration on a doctoral dissertation. Elaine was also a dedicated volunteer for Birthright in Leesburg, being recognized as that organization's longest serving volunteer. She received the Loudoun County Outstanding Woman of the Year award in 2004, citing her dedication to women's health. Elaine was a long-time Sunday school teacher at Leesburg Church of the Nazarene as well as serving in other youth activities leadership roles.

Elaine is survived by brothers Arthur, Paul, and Larry, sisters Phyllis and Debbie, children Stephen and Lara, their spouses Julia and Robert, and granddaughters Veronic and Isabell. Her husband Stanwyn preceded her in death.

A celebration of Elaine's life will be held on March 24th at 11 AM at Loudoun Funeral Chapel, 158 Catoctin Circle, SE, Leesburg, VA. The service will also be streamed. Flowers are accepted.



Events


Elaine Retberg Shetler

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Celebration of Life

 **Tuesday**, March 24, 2026

 11:00 AM ET

 **Loudoun Funeral Chapel**
158 Catocin Circle, S.E., Leesburg VA 20175





Tribute Wall

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Loudoun Funeral Chapels shared a **Webcast Video**.



March 12 at 4:47 PM



Greg Hostetler posted:

As a child I remember my brother and I visiting my Aunt and Uncle In DC. We were very fortunate to be able to go to the museums behind the scenes and to have 2 extremely knowledgeable people give us tours. My Aunt Elaine introduced us to Marionettes and Peter and the Wolf, they helped us pick out our own Marionette to take home and showed us how to make them move. Of course being little boys it did not take long before we figured out how to make them box each other. Time passes so quickly but the memories are still clear as if it were yesterday. God Bless her and her family.

March 24 at 9:54 AM



Maretta Hostetler posted:

I want to thank Lara and Stephen for their wonderful and thoughtful attention that they have given to Elaine in the time that she has been suffering with her illness. Elaine in her prime would have been so proud and appreciative of their care. Elaine was a very bright person who cared deeply about her work and was a great help to my brother Stanwyn. In the last couple years of his life he was incapacitated with Parkinsons, and she was there for him every step of the way. She was a true helpmate to him and his work. When my sons, Greg & Terry were little, they would visit them in Washington DC and Stanwyn & Elaine took them on sightseeing trips in DC to museums. We lived in Baltimore at that time and we enjoyed trips back and forth and their visiting with us in Baltimore. Elaine was especially great in her explanation of the places they visited. Elaine had an unusual laugh and I can hear her laughing we always had a good time with her and Stanwyn when we got together. Really good memories and I miss Elaine as I remembered before the onset of her final illness. I will miss her. Much love, Maretta Hostetler & David Towers

March 22 at 7:08 PM



Anonymous sent a Crystal Cross Bouquet to the Shetler family.



March 22 at 6:58 PM



Tribute Wall

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Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Elaine.



March 22 at 6:58 PM



Carol Lazer posted:

I hold so many wonderful memories of times spent with my dear sister-in-law, Elaine. She was a amazing cook and John and I LOVED her fruitcake! We never even liked fruitcake until we ate her homemade one the first time! After that we couldn't wait to eat the ones she made. She had a good sense of humor and I loved being with her. Their son, Stephen and our son, Zane are only a few months apart and we had fun doing things together so they could be together as well as our whole families. I could write a book on all the wonderful times spent with her and their family. She will be missed so much! I am consoled knowing she is with the Lord as she was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and we will meet again along with her husband/my brother Stanwyn, for eternity. What a glorious day that will be!

March 12 at 9:27 PM



David Retberg posted:

Two memories stand out of my aunt Elaine. One as host and tour guide and the other was her laughter. On two visits to D.C. she looked out for me and was the consummate tour guide. The first time for my sister and I while we were still young and in school, and the second time when in my early 20's. It was her attention to detail and effort of ensuring a good experience. The second was seeing humor in as such a time as she wondered whether two highly educated bird lovers (her and her husband Stanwyn) were able to effectively guide us through a forest trail with their noses in a book. I wonder if their appreciation for nature was lost on all of us at the time. Have Joy David Retberg Suwanee, GA

March 8 at 1:33 PM



Media

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March 12 at 4:47 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Elaine by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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