



Diane Tinker O'Cain

January 11, 1942 - January 4, 2019

Vicki Diane Tinker O'Cain, a devoted mother and grandmother who found great joy in her family, decorating, painting, and gardening, died January 4, 2019, one week before her birthday. She was 76. The daughter of James Logan and Jewel Houston Tinker, Diane was born on January 11, 1942 in Lexington, TN. She grew up in Parsons, where she was active in both band and sports. She played coronet and snare drums in the Parsons High School Marching Band. Diane loved sports, especially basketball, and was known as a formidable high school player throughout the region. She was awarded as All-District and All-State status.

After high school, Diane enrolled at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL. Along with regular courses, she studied fine art, design, and aesthetics, earning the degree Bachelor of Arts. Diane joined Sigma Kappa Sorority in college and held various offices with the Omega Chapter. She remained a lifelong member maintaining friendships with her sorority sisters throughout the years.

Diane met her former husband, Carl O'Cain, while she was in college and he was in the Air Force. They married in a ceremony in Parsons and returned to Florida's Cocoa Beach area where he was stationed with the space missions. After Carl's military service, the couple returned to Tennessee to run the family hardware and lumber company, Tinker Home Center.

Diane and Carl had two children, Sean and Heather. Over the years Diane was very active in her children's activities being a member of PTA, Band Boosters, Lady Lions, church youth groups, etc. On any given Friday night, you could find "Mrs. Diane" selling popcorn, grilling burgers or travelling to away games for her children, nieces and nephews.

Being an artist, Diane was called upon to create magical backgrounds, stages, costumes and any other event need. For many years, she painted beautiful background scenery as the backdrops to beauty pageants, fair showings and other award ceremonies. She was an expert seamstress and used her artistic skills to craft costumes for plays, Christmas pageants, majorettes, cheerleaders and others.

Because she was active with the events, games, church and school happenings, "Mrs. Diane" was a favorite among the local children and teens. Her home was host to numerous birthday and holiday parties for her group of kids. She often laughed when she was referred to as "cool" by the teens, but it pleased her that they were comfortable in her home.

Along with her family, Diane worked in the hardware business for years. She became well-versed in building materials and construction. She enjoyed working beside her father and interacting with the local customers, helping to find solutions to their construction problems.

To be closer to a college prep school, Diane's family moved to Jackson for several years. There she continued to support youth activities, sports and other events, such as creating stage sets for high school theater productions.

Later after the children were out of school, Diane moved to Nashville to live near to her daughter. She was an avid reader and soon found herself in a new

career field, working with Davis Kidd Book Sellers. She joined West End United Methodist Church of Nashville and became an active member. Using her love of books, she volunteered with her church to tutor underprivileged children with reading.

In 2002, Diane moved back to west Tennessee; this time to Memphis where her daughter and son-in-law had established medical practices. She joined the Church of the Holy Communion and found an immediate home of new friends and new opportunities to volunteer. Always a patron of the arts, Diane became a member of The Dixon Gallery and Gardens, the noted fine arts museum and horticultural park in Memphis.

Diane filled her life with art, beauty and joy, but with it also came pain. She lost her only son, Sean, in 1997. This was an emotional blow that dimmed her bubbly and cheerful personality. Adding to this was the pain that she suffered throughout her life with scoliosis and headaches. A patient of multiple back surgeries, Diane fought to maintain her active life, never giving in to the pain or struggle. In 2011, she suffered a stroke which then changed her life forever.

Even though she could no longer be as active, Diane always found projects that needed to be done! She used her phone and computer to organize people and plan events. She supported her grandchildren as their biggest fan and encouraged them to explore life and do great things. She loved watching Houston and Caroline learn and grow.

On January 4, 2019 Diane quietly left this life and passed into another. She leaves behind her daughter, Dr. Heather O'Cain Donato, and husband, Dr. Robert Alfred Donato, and her cherished grandchildren, Houston Barrett Donato and Caroline Grier Donato, all of Memphis; her sister, Linda Tinker Watkins and family of Parsons; 11 much-loved first cousins; and her caretaker

and friend, Mary Boone. Diane was preceded in death by her son, Sean Barry O'Cain; her mother, Jewel Houston Tinker; and her father, James Logan Tinker.

A graveside service to celebrate the life of Diane Tinker O'Cain will be held on Monday, April 22nd at 1:00 pm at the Houston Cemetery. Her ashes will be interred beside her beloved son. The family will receive guests after the service at the Tinker-Watkins family home in Parsons, 126 Northwood Street.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you remember Diane with a donation to the Decatur County Shepherd's Fund.

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