



## Della Christine Denison

December 31, 1951 - June 10, 2025

Mass of Christian Burial will be Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at 2:00 pm in St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church with Rev. Mark Mason celebrant. Burial will follow in Calvary Cemetery, Enid. Recitation of the Rosary will be Monday evening at 6:30 pm in Anderson-Burriss Funeral Home Chapel with sharing memories following. Funeral arrangements are by Anderson-Burriss Funeral Home and Crematory.

Della Christine (Estabrooks) Denison was born on December 31, 1951, to Milton and Nancy Estabrooks in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. She died at her home in Tulsa, OK on June 10, 2025, at the age of 73. Della's family is comforted by the fact that Della's faith in Jesus grew stronger as the end of her life grew nearer, and Della was comforted by the very real presence of the Holy Spirit that she experienced in her final months. Della was the oldest of eight children in a military and Catholic family. Some of her happiest childhood memories were spent in the Chesapeake Bay area, which created in her a lifelong love of beaches, the ocean, and seafood (especially crabcakes). She said her favorite subject in school was definitely science, but she also loved art and music. Della valued hard work, education, excellence and achievement. She graduated from Midwest City High School in 1971 having credentials to begin working immediately as a licensed practical nurse (LPN). She became the first LPN in the state of Oklahoma to be certified to assist in cardiac balloon pump procedures as a part of Dr. Zuhdi's team in Oklahoma City. She eventually

married one of her patients, JW Denison, and moved with him to Ardmore, OK. While living in Ardmore, Della returned to school and eventually became the first member of her family to graduate from college, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from East Central University in Ada, OK. She also earned a Master's Degree in Special Education. Della's prime teaching years were spent at Plainview Elementary in Ardmore, OK where she flourished as a skilled and innovative second grade teacher. Della used her keen eye and creative brain to create elaborate and fantastical displays in her classroom. One year her classroom had a jungle theme with three-dimensional monkeys, trees, vines, and tropical birds. While at Plainview, Della also led the Young Astronauts Club and Civil Air Patrol. In 1987, Della was named the Oklahoma Aerospace Teacher of the Year. In later years, Della experienced joy remembering and retelling the breakthroughs and successes of some of her struggling students. Della's third career was with the Oklahoma Air National Guard (OKANG), where she successfully completed boot camp at the age of 35! Her first position with the OKANG was as a flight nurse in the Aeromed unit (flying on C-130's). She eventually rose through the ranks and served as a logistic management specialist for the OKANG/USAF. Della was deployed to Iraq for Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Enduring Freedom (at which point she was a grandmother!). She also deployed to Mogadishu, Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope. On May 30, 2005, Della was honorably discharged because of permanent lung damage caused by a fungus she contracted in her lungs during her final Iraq deployment. At the time of her retirement, Della had a coveted full-time position on the Will Rogers Air Force base and retired as a Major. Della was proud to be an American and proud of her military service. At home, Della hosted massive Easter and July 4th parties, brought home every stray dog she encountered, canned vegetables grown in the family garden, created homemade Halloween costumes for her girls (one year creating Olive Oil, Popeye, and Sweet Pea costumes), helped the girls win Science Fairs, and developed their love of reading. In her later years, she delighted in her 12

grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren – and they loved their “Neena.” Della was preceded in death by JW Denison, her mother (Nancy Donnelley), her stepfather (Stan Donnelley), her sister (June Hicks Fox), her father (Milton Estabrooks), and her nephew (Christopher Estabrooks). Della is survived by her daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren: Dawn Murphy-Williams (Jack Stout): Abigail Williams (fiancé, Benjamin Ruiz) and

Andrea Williams Sonja Settle (David Settle): Jack Settle (wife, Hannah), Claire Settle, and Brooke Settle Natalie Schoenborn (Martin Nelson): Jonah Schoenborn, Thomas Schoenborn (wife, Hannah and children, Emmalyn and Elliot), Noah Schoenborn, Timothy Schoenborn, Hannah Schoenborn, Joshua Schoenborn, and Thaddaeus Nelson Della is also survived by her siblings and their children: John Estabrooks (Jackie): Bryan, Renee, Robert John and their families George Estabrooks (Susan): Mary, Brad, Tracy and their families and Christopher’s family Ann Hicks: Nick and Matthew Garner and their families Andrew Estabrooks (Chris): Tiffany and Ryan and their families Wesley Shawn Estabrooks (Mickala): Ellen and Rowdy and their families Harold Estabrooks (Chiara): Keith and Jimi and their families Survivors also include nephew Travis Fisher (and family) and niece Tegan Brown (and family), and close family friends: Randy Williams, Shana Estabrooks, and Susie Fisher.

# Previous Events

## Rosary

JUN 16. 6:30 PM (CT)

Anderson-Burriss Funeral Home Chapel  
3002 N. Van Buren  
Enid, OK 73703  
<http://www.andersonburriss.com>

## Mass of Christian Burial

JUN 17. 2:00 PM (CT)

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church  
110 N. Madison  
Enid, OK 73701

# Tribute Wall

N"

“ *Della, Thank you for your service. Dawn, Sonja, Natalie in my prayers. Susie Fisher*

Nada Susanne "Susie" Fisher - June 18, 2025 at 02:03 AM

PR

“ *Pat Ruiz purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Della Christine Denison.*



Pat Ruiz - June 16, 2025 at 11:28 AM

HF

“ *Harold and family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Della Christine Denison.*



Harold and family - June 16, 2025 at 09:51 AM

BM

“ *I remember when we deployed to Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Our C5 broke and we were stuck in the terminal 2 days and she called the boss and told them this wasn't working! She got us Motel rooms (even though ALL our personal things where still on the C5 somewhere) and bought us all water guns on the way to the rooms. Now that was one hell of a water fight. Some poor guy staying there got involved and we almost drowned him!! I'll never forget her! I can't even go into flying Areo Med missions with her!*

Bryan Utterback MSgt - June 14, 2025 at 04:07 PM

BU

*Bryan Utterback MSgt Retired OKANG*

---

**Bryan Utterback** - June 14, 2025 at 04:09 PM

GS

“ *Della wore many hats at the 137th, Oklahoma Air National Guard, Will Rogers World Airport, OKC,OK. She mobilized many folks within the 137th as well as herself and her own deployments. Major Denison was a true warrior and a professional leader. RIP, MA'AM. Salute! CMSgt (Ret) Gary Scott*

---

**Gary Scott** - June 12, 2025 at 05:26 PM

NF

*Thank you for your service Della. Parties go on in heaven when God calls all souls home. Dawn, Sonya, Natalie in my prayers. Susie Fisher*

---

**Nada Fisher** - June 15, 2025 at 02:55 PM