



Jeannine Brockmiller Bak

APR 30, 1929 - MAR 11, 2023



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MAUI MEMORIAL PARK
NAKAMURA MORTUARY
CEMETERY, CREMATION & FUNERAL

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“**S**he is clothed with strength and dignity. She can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed.” Proverbs 31:25-28.

On March 11, 2023, after almost 94 years of a remarkable, blessed, adventure-filled life; Heaven erupted into joyous celebration as Jeannine Brockmiller Bak was welcomed into eternity by her Savior and her Lord, Jesus. Now, resurrected in full glory, her body once again unbent and free from pain, her mind liberated from the shackles of dementia to marvel over the beauty of God's creation, she is reunited in Heaven with her kane aloha Johnny, her keiki aloha Evan, her parents Rudolph and Ruth, her sister Joan and more friends and admirers than there are stars in the Heavens.

Born on April 30, 1929, in St Louis Missouri, to a devout German Lutheran family (whose ancestors helped form the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod), Jeannine would forever make faith and love a central theme in her life. Bright, inquisitive, and creative, she excelled academically, developing a life-long passion for classical music, impressionist art, literature, philosophy, theology as well as candy, ice cream and pie. Always a woman of deep insight and thoughtful contradictions, Jeannine honored the traditions of her forebearers while charting her own path in life – often against petty conventions she saw as contrary to God's intentions and stifling the human imagination and soul.

Jeannine's insatiable thirst for knowledge and her desire to inspire that same longing in others, led her to a career in education. Her fearless hunger for adventure compelled her to accept the challenge to help a struggling public school on a remote island over 4000 miles away in the middle of the Pacific.

It was there on the island of Maui, while teaching Hawaiian, Filipino, Chinese and Japanese 2nd graders, that she met and fell in love with Johnny – a young, handsome, soft-spoken



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Hawaiian/Chinese boy. A more strikingly beautiful couple they could not have been. Their whirlwind romance became a lifelong partnership that lasted for almost 60 years; one that saw them through times both good and bad. As she frequently said “When I first met Johnny, he taught me to catch fish, but I ended up catching him!”

Together they helped start the first Lutheran Church on Maui – Emmanuel Lutheran – which continues to proclaim the Gospel over 50 years later. Together they became much beloved pillars in their community. Together they raised 3 beautiful ‘hapa’ children, Lee, Evan, and Ruth and taught them how to live right, true and well; lessons that Ruth and Lee passed down to their children who will, one day, pass it down to theirs. Together, Johnny and Jeannine lost their Evan before his time. That hurt. And while that loss challenged her faith, Jeannine never lost her deeply rooted connection with her God. His grace, seemingly obscure and distant at times, proved sufficient for her in the end.

Jeannine was a humble woman blessed by God with many talents and virtues - all of which she used to bless others and honor God.

She was an inventive teacher, engineer and activist who opened the minds of her students and inspired them to love learning and to use that knowledge for good. As an engineer, Jeannine designed and built her own incubator to show her students how life develops and that subsequently provided her own kids with pet chickens, fresh eggs and free fertilizer for years. As an activist, she helped her students initiate and lead a public campaign to stop the local sugar company from polluting surrounding communities. Above all, she left her mark on generations of young minds who, thanks in part to her, never stopped being curious, never stopped asking questions and never stopped caring about more than just themselves.

Along with her talents as an educator, God gifted Jeannine with the soul of an artist, and she expressed that gift gladly through a myriad of wonderful ways. She created beautiful illustrations that impressed a local art instructor and were eventually exhibited publicly. Inspired one night by a vision from God, she created a banner depicting the Trinity, which was so novel and inspirational that it became a regular fixture at Emmanuel Lutheran for many years. More practically, she sewed, crocheted, and knitted clothes, blankets, towels for herself, her family and friends. Except for forcing liver on her kids during the ‘60s, she was also an artist in the kitchen whose list of mouth-watering inventive from-scratch recipes were envied, often imitated but



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never duplicated – especially her glorious mango chutney and her decadent out-of-this-world fudge.

She was an intrepid thrill seeker, planning and coordinating worldwide treks over many years that took her and her beloved Johnny to the farthest ends of the globe. Jeannine spoke ‘french’ and mixed with the locals at a bistro in Paris. She traversed the Serengeti in search of lions. She scaled the terrain of Machu Picchu and rode the double-decker through Piccadilly Square. She ate hummus by the pyramids and dined on duck in Peking. She consorted with wallabies in Australia; rounded the Cape Horn in search of whales, slurped up ramen on the ginza, brushed by the shores of Antarctica and flew past the north pole (and swore she caught a glimpse of Ol’ St Nick).

In her spare time, Jeannine was a devoted animal lover and a compassionate conservationist who ran her own in-house animal shelter and recovery center – rescuing and rehabilitating countless numbers of wounded and abandoned animals. She was a philosopher who blended theology, phenomenology, epistemology, metaphysics, and taxonomy into a theory that explained and contrasted consciousness between different strata of forms.

And lest it be forgotten, Jeannine was a Maui Girl. A local. Definitely not a haole.

Above all else, she was a devoted wife and mother and disciple of Jesus. To Johnny, she showed him the world and an enduring love that never waned. To her children she taught them to love life and Jesus and gave them a safe, fun and loving home - a refuge from a sometimes harsh and unforgiving world. But she also gave them a realistic unsentimental view of that world and taught them how to navigate it. To Jesus, she entrusted him with her life, heart, and soul.

Her earthly body has now returned to the dust from which it came. Her legacy continues however, in the minds and hearts of her children and her children’s children and for generations to come. That legacy continues as well in the minds and hearts of many others, too many to count, who were blessed to have known her. Most importantly she has been resurrected with a glorious new body and now sits in the presence of her Lord with Johnny and Evan by her side. May she rest in the peace and joy of her Lord and Creator. Now and forever. And may we one day also step into eternity and join her in that glory.

Goodbye for now, Mom, Grandma, Gummy, and daughter of God. You are and always will be the best mom and grandmother ever.



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Jeannine passed peacefully into Jesus' arms while surrounded by her loving family in Minneapolis Minnesota. She was preceded in death by her parents Rudolph and Ruth (Frentzel) Brockmiller, her sister Joan Buskirk, her son Evan Bak and her husband John Bak Jr. She is survived by her children; son Lee Bak of Minneapolis, MN; daughter Ruth (Del) Shimandle of Chicago, IL and 6 grandchildren, Simone (Dany) Nasry of Washington DC, Antone (Whitney) Bak of Alphretta GA, Caleb Bak of Blaine MN, Emma Bak of Austin TX, and Ian and Josiah Shimandle of Chicago, IL, along with her faithful cat Pixie."



Events

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Cemetery Details



Maui Memorial Park

450 Waiale Road, Wailuku HI 96793



808-495-4306





Memories only last if you share them

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



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