



Dorothy Joyce Brennan

FEB 7, 1937 - FEB 19, 2024



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HAWAIIAN
MEMORIAL PARK MORTUARY
AT VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES

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On Monday, February 19, Dorothy Joyce Nesselth Brennan (87) passed away peacefully at home on O’ahu holding hands with two of her sons. Dottie, as she was lovingly known, was born on February 7, 1937 in Hazel Park, MI, but spent most of her childhood in Madison, SD to parents of Norwegian ancestry. After receiving her Master’s degree in Education, in 1968, she and her husband Dr. Paul Brennan, along with their two older sons began their life in the Pacific islands by moving to the rural highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG) where they lived among the Enga people. As Paul worked in linguistics and anthropology, Dottie nurtured their growing family of adventurous and active boys (Eric, Nathan, Lars and Jason) by letting them express who they were, keeping them well-fed with delicious home-made and often home-grown meals made on the wood stove that also heated the water for their bucket shower.

When the family moved to Port Moresby, the capital of PNG, Dottie taught at Korobosea Elementary School. In 1981 she and her family moved back to the U.S. (Hawai’i) settling in Maunawili valley. In Hawai’i she taught at Our Redeemer Lutheran School and then at several public elementary schools (Pope, Kailua, Kainalu) on windward O’ahu. She was a supportive, loving wife, devoted mother, loving teacher and friend, and talented artist. She loved animals and pets were important companions throughout her life.

Dottie had a creative and artistic eye but didn’t have time to fully develop it until retirement. The quilts that she made for each grandchild, and the colorful pillows are a testament of her productivity to the last year of her life and her desire to leave something of herself for her loved ones. The home that she and Paul made together combined their talents and ‘can do’ attitude long before DIY (do-it-yourself) was a popular phrase – he made the chairs and sofas, while she made the colorful cushions. She loved painting, and explored watercolor, acrylic, palette knife and pastel. Dottie excelled at tissue paper collages which along with paintings decorated the family home with scenes of grandkids, landscapes, favorite pets, tropical fruits and flowers, and ocean scenes. While doing art she explored, experimented, and had fun, and passed on this



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approach to others she created with. Dottie had a progressive Christian faith, and was a free and open thinker who recognized the value in other spiritual traditions that also helped in her journey. She loved gardening, and weeding, as she climbed over the terraces in the back of their yard tending to ornamentals and vegetables.

She had a generous heart and a twinkle in her eye, was witty, spunky and humble, with a humorous, transparent streak that drew others to her and made her easy to get to know and love. She loved people and her empathy and compassion showed through in the way that she nurtured her four sons and the many foster children that she and Paul cared for. She was extremely perceptive, and inquisitive and not afraid to ask hard questions. In her last decade, she had this amazing ability to bounce back from several falls and broken bones. This was due in part to her love of life and the loving care by Paul, her faithful companion of 63 years who passed away in September of last year. While Paul's death was difficult for her, Dottie received abundant love, care and support from her caregiver (Sela Tukuafu), neighbors, family and friends. As she became less mobile, she often spent hours each day sitting outside on her swing overlooking the Koolau range and Mt. Olomana, soaking in a view that brought her peace.

She is survived by her four sons, Dr. Eric Brennan (Ana Sandoval) of Salinas, CA, Dr. Nathan Brennan (Christina Caldwell) of Sarasota, FL, Lars Brennan (Yanah Brennan) of Vancouver, WA, Jason Brennan (Dr. Julie Motosue-Brennan) of Elk Grove, CA, and 16 grandchildren and one great grandchild. She was one of five children, and she is survived by sibling Phyllis Black (Nelson, MO), and preceded in death by siblings Charles Nesseth, Aubrey Nesseth and Julie Griggs. Her grandchildren include Milan Brennan, Paolo Brennan, Sydney Brennan, Andrew Brennan, Jack Brennan, Brianna Brennan, Madison Cantrell (Dylan Cantrell), Lucas Brennan, Aliyah Brennan, Hannah Brennan, Jedidiah Brennan, Benjamin Brennan, Emi Brennan, Logan Brennan, Koa Brennan, Kenzie Brennan. Her great grandchild is Maverick Cantrell. A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 2 at Christ Church Uniting (1300 Kailua Rd), followed by a reception; visitation will be at 10 a.m.

The service will be live streamed at this link, <https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchUniting>



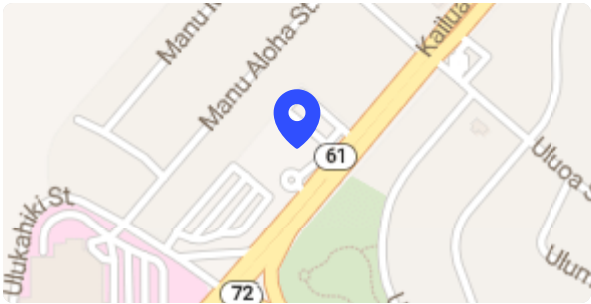
Events

Dorothy Joyce Brennan

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Celebration of life

- Saturday**, March 2, 2024
- 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM HST
- Christ Church Uniting**
1300 Kailua Rd , Kailua HI 96734





Tribute Wall

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Benjamin Brennan posted:

hi I'm her grandson and I miss her

September 17 at 5:25 AM



Kris Hockett posted:

My Aunt Dot was a wonderful, loving person. So many memories of the sweet sparkle in her eye and her adventure. She and my Mom talked every week and Mom would give me weekly updates on her and Uncle Paul, when he was still with us. My sympathies to my cousins, Eric, Nathan, Lars and Jason. I am so very sorry that you all have to walk this road right now. It would be so wonderful to connect with you all again someday. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Love, Kris (Black) Hockett, Bismarck, ND

March 1 at 1:54 AM



Benjamin Brennan September 17 at 5:29 AM

thank you guys I'm her grandson and I really miss her



Dr. Ken Mays Pianist For Crusader's Quar March 4 at 1:19 PM

A wonderful follower of Jesus Christ, a great mom and wife for Paul. Many precious memories of this loving couple. May our gracious Lord give peace and each to each family member. Aloha!! 🌸



Memories only last if you share them

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



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