



## Nina Louise Smith Francis

September 16, 1932 - August 24, 2011

NINA LOUISE SMITH FRANCIS

September 16, 1932 - August 24, 2011

Resident of Benicia

Nina Lou passed peacefully to the arms of her Lord in the early hours of August 24 in Vallejo, after a lengthy illness. She was 78 years young.

She was a native of St. Ignatius, Montana and from a pioneer family. She was born in the sole hospital in the area on a Native American reservation and loved telling friends that she “was born on an Indian reservation.” She was the 1st of 4 daughters born to Ford R. Smith and Kathleen Salzman. The Smiths moved to Fairfax, Marin County in 1942, and to Benicia in 1943. Nina Lou graduated from Benicia High in 1950, and was active in drama and art activities. She was a talented sketch artist and was often urged to follow that talent. She was also active in Rainbow For Girls, serving through the chairs and as Worthy Advisor.

At age 13, she contracted polio, and was driven in her rehabilitation to regain use of her limbs. She succeeded to a high degree. She has been a member for many years of the S.F. Bay Area Polio Survivors Ass'n. Following graduation from B.H.S., Nina Lou began her lifetime

profession as a dental assistant and dental office manager. She became active with the Contra Costa County Dental Assistants Society and the Diablo Valley College Dental Assistants Department. She became an instructor at D.V.C., and then rose to president of the CCCDAS, enjoying a successful term, and served on the board of directors. She was proud to have devoted over 26 years to the dental profession.

In 1951, Nina Lou met a young college grad in Benicia and pointing to a man parking his car told a girlfriend, "I'm going to marry that man." In 1953, she indeed did marry "that man", Bill Francis, and the marriage lasted over 58 years, the balance of her life. They resided and enjoyed 54 years in Walnut Creek and were active in several community organizations. Both loved traveling, and cruising, and over the years vacationed on Maui many times, other Hawaiian Islands, Canada, Europe, Mexico, Alaska, Montana and other Western states.

Nina Lou was a natural "Auntie Mame" for all the youngsters from both families. She spent many years, as well as boundless energy and creativity, helping care for, raise and teach, "the kids." Countless summer long swim parties, sleepovers, beach outings, S.F. trips all brought her lifelong love from "the kids."

She was predeceased by her parents, a grandmother for whom she was named, a grandfather, 2 sets of favorite aunts and uncles, and a nephew.

She is survived by her husband, Bill; sisters, Gayle McConlogue and Bobbie Nickolatos of Benicia, and Kathy Smith of Vallejo; sister-in-law, Beverly Acevedo of Benicia; brother-in-law, Richard Francis of Martinez; and numerous nieces, nephews, grand nieces, grand nephews and cousins.

Memorial donations may be made to the March of Dimes, or the charity of your choice.

Visitation will be held 4-9 p.m. Monday with a vigil service at 7 p.m. Monday at Passalacqua Funeral Chapel, 901 West 2nd St., Benicia. Mass of Christian Burial will be held 11 a.m. Tuesday at St. Dominic's Church, 450 East I St., Benicia. Burial will follow at St. Dominic's Cemetery, Benicia.

Please visit the online tribute at [PassalacquaFuneralChapel.com](http://PassalacquaFuneralChapel.com). (707)-745-3130.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Nina Louise Smith Francis*

---

November 29, 2022 at 08:20 PM



“ *For over 60 years I have had the great privildge to be one of NinaLou's many friends. She was very special and her beautiful sparkling personality lit up the room. Over 30 years ago you invited me to your BHS luncheons,thank you NinaLou. We will carry on,but you chair can never be filled. Love always, Bev and Ed Williams.*

---

**Bev williams** - August 29, 2011 at 03:22 PM