

Nancy Crookston Obituary

November 17, 1948 - November 23, 2023



Nancy Seamons Crookston, a designated Oil Painters of America Master and one of the most widely recognized artists in the nation, died Friday, November 17, 2023, from complications of shoulder surgery. She was 74, a week away from her Thanksgiving Day birthday.

She was born on November 23, 1948, in rural Hyde Park, Utah, the first of four children of Rhonda Raymond and Rendell Mack Seamons. Nancy loved her mom and dad, who helped her develop her insatiable curiosity and love for people, music, and the beauty of the world. She grew up in a small community of friends and family, climbing apple trees and eating too many green apples,

floating zucchini boats down the canal, and running down the street to Grandma Melba and Grandpa Harvey's house or the candy store.

That little girl with perfect ringlets and a big bright smile discovered sidewalk chalk and decided she wanted to become an artist. With sheer determination and hard work, she would eventually become a prolific, professional artist, represented in galleries and museums around the world, from Coronado to Charleston to China.

Nancy went to Sky View High School and Utah State University, where she met Garr J. Crookston. Garr was smitten when he first saw her at the library and moved quickly to meet her. They were married on January 25, 1967, in Cache Valley, Utah. He was her true partner in life and was by her side every step of the way, even catching her when she collapsed on the morning of her death. They spent 56 years together, hardly ever apart.

They lived in Bettendorf, Iowa; Pocatello, Idaho; Logan, Utah; and Alameda, California. They had five children and countless pets. She taught her children to love life, find a passion, be curious, and see the beauty in all people.

Nancy juggled being a mom while being a full-time artist with complete grace and determination. She wore both hats so well people frequently asked how she did it.

Early on in her career, Nancy learned from renowned Russian artist, Sergei Bongart. From penned sketches to watercolors to clay sculptures, she studied many art mediums and excelled in all of them. She was most widely known and awarded for her oil figure paintings, many featuring children on a beach, frolicking in the sand. After attending a sketching class at UC Berkeley in 2007 she was convinced that she needed to move to the Bay Area, where her work flourished even more with the art scene. How amazing the models were! It was like a candy store!

She earned many awards over her career, including six Gold Medal awards from the Oil Painters of America, the most recent in October, the gold medal awarded at the Western Regional Exhibition for her painting, "I'll Show You How It's Done." She will be honored with a California Art Club signature member designation posthumously.

Nancy and Garr sketched during breakfast at diners in Alameda almost every morning. She sometimes caught restaurant servers off guard when she would gush about their beautiful features and colors. It was almost like she was painting them in her head right then and there.

She felt music like her late trumpet-playing father and loved hearing his favorite big band music.

Nancy became fierce when she heard about any injustice in the world. She fought for women's rights. She hated prejudice. She wanted people to be open-minded and work together.

Learning until the day she died, she was determined to become better, taking class after class. The day before she died, she took an online ganache course, and unbeknownst to her, completed her final painting of Santa, a series she had started decades prior.

In the final year of her life, Nancy -- always the artist -- was drawn back to the sidewalk chalk of her youth. She'd create whimsical creations of characters crawling out of the sidewalk for the neighbors to enjoy as they walked by.

Nancy was the best wife, mom, granny, sister, and daughter. She would boast about her wonderful, accomplished children and her "perfect" grandkids.

Continuing forward is her husband Garr and their five children: Amelia (John Bullock), Jesse (Andrea Bishop), Sara (Jesse Sedillo), Raymond (Jessica Davis), and Maxwell (Sandy Khonnak); nine grandchildren (Taylor, Mary, Elizabeth, Samuel, Margaret, Ethan, Cooper, Lucy, Simon); nine great-grandchildren; her brother Jay (Marsha), sister Renee (Ross) and brother Clayton (Julie). She was preceded in death by her parents, Rendell and Rhonda Seamons.

One of Crookston's wishes in life was for others to have the opportunity to pursue art without barriers. A memorial account under her name has been set up by her family for anyone wishing to donate and carry on her legacy: Nancy S. Crookston OPAM Memorial Contributions

<https://www.oilpaintersofamerica.com/product/in-loving-memory-of-nancy-s-crookston-opam/>

Published by Logan Herald Journal on Nov. 25, 2023.

OPA Blog Article – Forever in Our Hearts OPA Says Goodbye to Nancy S. Crookston
OPAM - <https://www.oilpaintersofamerica.com/2023/11/forever-in-our-hearts/>