



Marcia Joan Baker

May 4, 1942 - February 21, 2025

Marcia Joan Riggs was born on May 4, 1942, in Normal, Illinois to Ralph Brown Riggs and Geraldine “Gerry” Riggs. For the first part of her life, she lived with her parents and her older brother Ralph on the north side of Chicago, Illinois on the last street of the city at the boundary with Skokie, Illinois. At the age of 12, Joan (as she preferred to be called), went to live with her maternal grandparents, Mary Katherine Ragel and Joseph Leland Ragel when her mother contracted polio and was confined to a hospital for four years. Joan started high school at Shires High School in Chicago in 1957. When her mother was discharged from the hospital, Joan’s father was told by doctors to move his wife (now needing to walk with a cane) out of the Midwest and to some location that “didn’t have six feet of snow in the wintertime.” Ralph Riggs came to California and travelled the state of California searching for a position in school administration. Stopping in Tulare, Ralph interviewed and was told,

“Mr. Riggs we don’t have a principal’s job for you this year, but if you teach this year for us, we will make you Principal of our brand new junior high school next year.” Joan’s Father considered that to be his best offer and accepted. He did become the first head of school of Cherry Avenue Junior High School in 1959. With that decision, he moved his family to California in 1958 and Joan transferred from Shires High School to Tulare High School for her sophomore year.

While some people might be traumatized by the culture shock of moving across the country from urban Chicago to rural Tulare, Joan’s problems in that regard were minimized when a young man named Glen Baker caught her attention just a few months after she arrived in California. In what would go down in family lore, she famously “tossed” a box of popcorn at Glen in a Tulare movie theatre and soon thereafter they were dating. On April 15 th , 1961, they were married in Tulare. Within a year, Glen started a job with the Southern California Edison Company, and they moved to Lancaster, California. It was there that Joan began working for Bank of America. In 1964, their son Gregory Edward Baker was born followed by their daughter, Jill Christine Baker in 1966.

In 1969, Glen was granted a transfer by Edison to move from Lancaster back the central

valley and the city of Porterville. A few years later, Joan began working at Burton School as a classroom aide and she would stay in that position for 28 years retiring in 1998 after Glen had retired from Edison. With the encouragement of their long-time friends, Lanny and Anita Loveland, Joan and Glen retired to Cambria where they made many friends and enjoyed numerous wonderful days in that beautiful town. For many years, Joan worked as a docent at the Hearst Castle Visitors Center where she enjoyed meeting tourists from all over the United States and around the world. Joan loved the central coast and living her life with her husband in this area. She died on February 21, 2025, in San Luis Obispo after suffering a heart attack on January 29th . Joan is survived by her husband Glen of 64 years, son Greg and wife Jami, and her daughter Jill. Six grandchildren, David Christopher Gonzales and wife Lauren, Alecia Gonzales, Cassandra Baker, Jacob Gonzales, Grant Baker and Anthony Gonzales. Joan is also survived by two great-grandchildren Ezra and Myles Gonzales.

The entire family invites all of Joan's family and friends to join them for a Celebration of Life on April 5, 2025, at "The Barn at Fogs End", 2735 Main Street in Cambria at 1:00 PM.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR 5. 1:00 PM (PT)

The Barn at Fogs End
2735 Main St
Cambria, CA 93428

Tribute Wall

FF

“ From Shirley Bastady and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Marcia Joan Baker.

From Shirley Bastady and family - April 03, 2025 at 03:03 PM

FF

“ From Shirley Bastady and family purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Marcia Joan Baker.



From Shirley Bastady and family - April 03, 2025 at 03:03 PM

LF

“ Lauren F. purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Marcia Joan Baker.



Lauren F. - March 04, 2025 at 10:11 PM