



Priscilla Joanne Stam

October 9, 1934 - July 2, 2017

Priscilla Joanne Stam, 82, of Williamsburg, VA passed away July 2, 2017. Priscilla was born in Boston, MA on October 9, 1934. Her family moved to New York City, where she attended Forest Hills High School. She began her undergraduate work at Wheaton College in Illinois at the age of 16. It was at Wheaton College that she met her husband, Jim. She and Jim were married in 1955 upon graduation. She began teaching Art in the school systems of West Chicago and St. Charles, IL.

After Pris & Jim moved to CA, she began working on her PhD in Education at Stanford University, which she completed in 1970. She taught in the Education Department at SUNY Oswego, and she was also the head of the Special Education Department at Fontbonne College in St. Louis, MO.

Priscilla was preceded in death by her daughter, Cathryn E. Stam. She is survived by her husband of 62 years, James Stam; daughter, Deborah Stam of Salisbury, MD; and grandson, Jason Stam, of Germantown, MD.

A memorial service will be held 2 PM, Monday, July 10th at Vincent Funeral Home, 9923 Pocahontas Trail, Providence Forge, VA. The family will receive friends an hour prior to the service, at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Salvation Army, 151 Kristiansand Dr. #109, Williamsburg, VA 23188.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUL **10**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Vincent Funeral Home, Providence Forge Chapel
9923 Pocahontas Trail
Providence Forge, VA 23140
(804) 966-7075

Tribute Wall

JM

“ Priscilla Stam, my 6th-grade teacher at Little Woods School in the late 1950s, had a profound and positive impact on my life, and on many others I'm sure. It couldn't have been easy for a young teacher with class size sometimes exceeding 33-35 students in the post-war baby-boom era. Usually her lessons immediately "connected" with me, and other times it took years to fully understand and integrate the depth of it all.

She had a passion for art. Our class made a huge historical mural that was displayed at Little Woods for decades. She taught us to obey the law. However, if we believed a law to be unjust we should work to change it, to stand-up for those being wronged. She taught me to appreciate history and art while weaving in the foundation of government and justice. But most important, she taught me how to think and instilled important values.

She used her version of "Brown Eyes - Blue Eyes" in our classroom around 1958, long before it became a well-known method to teach about discrimination, and long before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I clearly remember going home and asking my mother about eye color. Eyeballs all looked the same to me, white smears with darker centers. A trip to an eye doctor followed shortly thereafter, along with my first pair of glasses. I was on high alert all during "Brown Eyes - Blue Eyes" squinting to see who had what color eyes.

She taught me about gender discrimination. Some 60 years later I still remember standing with other girls in the gym after a girls' basketball game, excited at the prospect of playing others in 7th grade. She explained, "Girls in 7th grade on can't play, it's the law." I was crestfallen and outraged. Today, many don't realize the social justice changes brought about by Title IV in 1972.

Though at home our TV was always tuned to the nightly news, she was the one who opened my eyes to the world outside of our school, outside of St. Charles. She taught about different cultures, and the way students in other countries were required to behave.

Priscilla Stam was a uniquely strong and intelligent woman who made this world a better place.

I had long wished for the opportunity to tell her how she had helped shape my life, what she did for me. Over the years I've been involved in many social justice activities, in large part because of the values she instilled. When her obituary appeared, I had to take a deep breath as the tears welled up. I called the funeral home to confirm it was really "my" Mrs. Stam from Little Woods. The lady at Vincent Funeral Home said she would check and call me back. A few hours later, my phone rang. It wasn't the funeral home, it was Priscilla's daughter, Deborah, calling. Her father, Jim Stam, was nearby in the background. We talked. We cried. She was curious how I had learned of her mother's passing. I said something like, "I have daily google alerts set for St. Charles IL, and her obituary was there today. But I needed to be sure it was the same Mrs. Stam, so I called the funeral home. She meant so much to me." We talked and cried some more. I don't think I ever fully conveyed to Deborah the life-long impact her mother made on me.

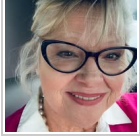


June McDowall - July 10, 2017 at 09:44 AM

DS

June, this is Deborah. Thank you so much for the wonderful tribute to my mother. I enjoyed our talk so much. I incorporated some of what you shared with me in my comments for the memorial service, which Rev. Palmer was kind enough to read for me, as I wouldn't have made it through. Thanks again. Take care.

Deborah Stam - July 10, 2017 at 08:02 PM



“ *Jeanne Loyd lit a candle in memory of Priscilla Joanne Stam*



Jeanne Loyd - July 05, 2017 at 11:08 AM