



Donelda LaBrake

April 8, 1937 - April 17, 2021

Donelda R. (Choate) LaBrake, age 84, wife of David L. LaBrake, of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, passed away on Saturday, April 17, 2021 in her residence. Born on April 8, 1937 in Lancaster, New York, she was a daughter of the late Ruth (Tubbs) and J. Harry Choate.

Donelda graduated in 1958 from Rochester Institute of Technology with a degree in Art and Design where she was active on the fencing team and became an accomplished artist. She met and married her future husband David at RIT. They remained faithfully married, for better and for worse, in sickness and in health, for nearly 63 years until parted by death. Donelda was a very loving and faith-filled wife, mother, and grandmother. Early in her faith life she was Chairperson of the Valley Forge Christian Women's Club. She had a strong and resolute faith in Jesus Christ as her Savior and Lord. She passed her faith in Jesus on to her children, and fully demonstrated her unwavering faith when diagnosed with an aggressive and incurable illness three weeks prior to her death.

Love of family and grandchildren were central to her mission in life. She was deliberate and honest about working to pass her faith to her family, and she consistently exhibited a strong work ethic and drive for excellence in every aspect of her life. Each of her children benefited greatly from her mentorship and devotion to her family. She passed on her love for nature and flowers to

her son Derron, who became a practicing botanist and ecologist. Derron also benefited from her creative genes as he refurbishes very old houses and makes furniture. Delmalyn, her only daughter, received her artistic talent and caring spirit as an artist and nurse. Donelda's attention to detail and mechanical reasoning were passed to her youngest son Dwayne, the PhD scientist.

As the children grew, she had more time to explore her passion for art and design. She worked as a substitute art teacher for the Phoenixville School District when her children were young and later worked as a commercial design artist for Avon Products, Gibson Greeting cards, Lenox China and the Cointreau Liqueurs and as an interior designer. In her later years, she became an accomplished wildlife and recognized botanical artist. In 2004, her painting of *Paphiopedilum g. Jacqi* was featured in the 11th International Exhibition of Botanical Art and Illustration <https://www.huntbotanical.org/exhibitions/show.php?29>. In 2017, Donelda's painting of a parrot tuip was the artwork used at the entrance for the Philadelphia Flower Show (Holland: Flowering the World). She started as a student in 1996 and later became a beloved instructor of botanical illustration at Longwood Gardens. Her paintings are part of private collections including Longwood Gardens and the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation at Carnegie Mellon University <https://huntbot.org/internatcat/ artwork/labrake-donelda-choate>.

In addition to her husband, Mrs. LaBrake is survived by her children: Delmalyn (Norman) Vaughn, of Cheltenham, Derron (Susan) LaBrake, of Havertown and Dwayne (Cynthia) of Cedar Park, TX; eight grandchildren: Peter Vaughn, Naomi (Matthew) Dassow, Kathryn LaBrake, Aileen LaBrake, Fiona LaBrake, Carder (Conley) LaBrake, Cole LaBrake and Christian LaBrake; siblings: Jean Suess, of Lancaster, NY and William Choate of Corfu, NY; and numerous nieces and nephews. In addition to her parents, Donelda was preceded in death by a brother: Hugh Choate.

A private entombment service will be held in the Limerick Garden of Memories. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Donelda's name to Charity International Ministries, P.O. Box 307, Cheltenham, PA 19012. Charity International is a Haitian Orphanage that Donelda supported for many years. Arrangements are being handled by the Campbell - Ennis - Klotzbach Funeral Home, Inc., Phoenixville. Condolences may be offered online at www.PhoenixvilleFuneralHome.com.

Cemetery Details

Limerick Garden of Memories

44 Arcadia Drive
Limerick, PA 19468

Tribute Wall

PA

“ *The world will never be quite as beautiful without Donni in it. She was so gracious, talented and caring...and the best neighbor ever! Sending our love and condolences to the family. We are holding you close in our hearts. Pat & Earle Andrews*

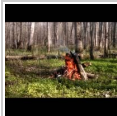
Pat Andrews - May 17, 2021 at 09:24 AM

CG

“ *To say that Donnie was beautiful does not do her justice. She was definitely pretty but her true beauty came from the contentment and joy she radiated. Her smile drew people close with its inner warmth. Donnie was wonderful at "being there" for others. She knew how to comfort friends, happily surprise them, and make them feel special. We, the Wilsons, were blessed to have her for a neighbor. We are heartbroken for Dave, Delmalyn, Derron, Dwayne and their families.*

Cathy Glaab - May 16, 2021

cathy glaab - May 16, 2021 at 08:53 PM



Don't be sad we all know she's even happier now! Rejoice

Eric Choate - June 06, 2021 at 06:58 AM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Delmalyn Vaughn - April 25, 2021 at 07:53 PM



“ 3 files added to the tribute wall

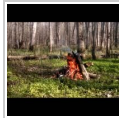


Delmalyn Vaughn - April 25, 2021 at 07:01 PM



Pictures of Mom recently sent to me by her niece Carrie Gerhardt.

Delmalyn Vaughn - April 25, 2021 at 07:02 PM



Wow is that Her and my Grandpa Hugh?

Eric Choate - June 06, 2021 at 07:00 AM

DL

“ We are sending thoughts and prayers with the family at this time of a great loss. I have fond memories of Aunt Donni. Her and Uncle David surprised Barbara and I by showing up to our wedding 23 years ago and again some years before that while I was in Florida. We exchanged Christmas cards over the years with Uncle David keeping us updated on the family. Some of those cards were done by Aunt Donni's amazing artwork. Barbara and I wish our Uncle David, our cousins and the family our heart felt condolences, knowing God is holding them close. David and Barbara LaBrake

David L LaBrake - April 25, 2021 at 12:02 AM

TC

“ My thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends, Aunt Donelda was a very loving and caring woman she had a big heart and will be missed by all her loved ones, may she rest in peace....



Tamara Chrisman - April 24, 2021 at 03:41 AM

LL

“ My thoughts and prayers are with the entire family at this time. It was always nice to see Donelda and her family when they attended our family get-togethers even though it was a long drive for them, we always had family news to catch up on. i am thankful for such a wonderful Christian sister in law. Love, Lucy LaBrake Lieber

Lucy Lieber - April 23, 2021 at 11:53 AM

PC

“ I have so many memories from the 33 years of our shared joy in our children and grandchildren, however to be brief my favorite memory was our combined effort in creating illustrated poems for our grand boys, her talent made the words come alive, now they will cherish these gifts for the rest of their lives.



Pat Carder - April 23, 2021 at 08:47 AM



“ Donnie was a gracious hostess and an amazing artist. She accepted us as family when we moved to Philadelphia. Our hearts are with her family. Love from Paula and Jeff Schnabel

Paula Carder - April 22, 2021 at 10:27 PM



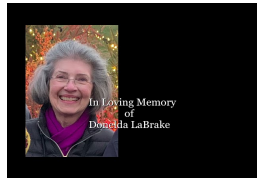
“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Donelda LaBrake.*



April 22, 2021 at 03:19 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Norman Vaughn - April 22, 2021 at 10:24 AM

MT

She's rejoicing in heaven! He is near the broken-hearted and he binds up their wounds. Praying for the family.

Millie Torres - April 22, 2021 at 12:13 PM

BW

Absolutely beautiful, inside and out. Such talent in every aspect of her life. I loved her so. We talked for hours. My heart is broken. But Dale and I were so very blessed to be able to have her in our lives. She will be terribly missed by us. Our love and prayers are with her sweet husband and their family. Brenda White

Brenda White - April 22, 2021 at 12:19 PM

PC

Such a beautiful soul. I loved our times together though they were few. I know that she is finally home and we will have eternity to share.

pam choate - April 22, 2021 at 12:29 PM

MS

Mrs. LaBrake beautiful person, I will always remember her, and her loving ways. Heart of gold she had. I am fortunate to have a painting that she did for me, one that I will never let go! RIP and fly high my sweet angel!

myriam santiago - April 22, 2021 at 04:31 PM

GC

Donni was a lovely person and a fabulous botanical artist. She was also a kind and encouraging teacher at Longwood. It was a pleasure to know her a little and see her meticulous work.

Gretchen Cox - April 22, 2021 at 07:16 PM

DL

The first of our "four friends" from CCHS has gone before us...she will pave the way for us in her sweet, gracious way. Love, Erna, Liz & Diane

Diane Lenters - April 22, 2021 at 07:43 PM

JS

Death is not the end for Donni. The Bible says we, who are followers of Christ, will have a glorious resurrection from the grave when Christ returns. Then we will spend eternity in Heaven. So Donni has left all of us who loved her and her earthly home. The great ending is that the grave is only a temporary dwelling and we will be reunited and spend eternity in Heaven. I Thes. 4:16. During this time of sorrow and grief, we can be optimistic because we will see Donni again. Thank you Lord. Love you forever, Your sister, Jean

Jean Suess - May 20, 2021 at 10:24 PM