



## Debra Kay Hopper Suing

January 25, 1961 - March 11, 2024

Debra Kay Hopper Suing was welcomed by choirs of angels to eternal rest and everlasting life on March 11, 2024, at the age of 63. Born January 25, 1961 near Tokyo, Japan, Debi was the youngest of three children to SMSgt Frank and Eva Hopper.

In her early childhood, Debi lived as a “military brat” while her father’s career in the United States Air Force moved the family every few years to new, unfamiliar places. Two years after the birth of “Debi-Doo” in Japan, the family moved to California, and then San Antonio, Texas, where Debi attended Winston Elementary School, joining the choir and participating in the Miss Winston Elementary Pageant. The family made lifelong friends while living at the Billy Mitchell Apartments near Kelly AFB, including Debi’s godparents Nona and Paul Gembarowski. After Frank’s retirement from active duty in the Air Force in 1968, he continued his service in the Air Force Reserves and began a new career in the Veteran’s Administration. The family continued to uproot frequently, living in Iowa, Kansas, and New York within the span of eight years, and finally settling back in San Antonio in 1976.

Debi became a proud Ram at John Marshall High School, where she excelled in academics and extracurricular activities. Throughout high school, Debi sang in the Youth Choir at St. Matthew Catholic Church, where she met Sr. Therese Gleitz, who became a dear mentor and friend. She developed her natural leadership skills through involvement in Student Council and National Honor Society, while pursuing her true passions in the concert choir and drama

department. She served as a choir officer and performed as First Chair Alto and Section Leader, making All-District Concert Choir and receiving multiple awards and medals in choir competitions. In her senior year, Debi was elected Class Secretary and was cast as the female lead role of Abigail in the production of "The Crucible". She was voted "Most Talented" (and "Most Fashionable", but after being told that students were allowed to receive only one superlative, she chose substance over style). Debi graduated from the Class of 1979 with honors, and at Commencement she delivered solos of the National Anthem and the Marshall Alma Mater.

Debi postponed pursuing her dream of singing on Broadway and a career in the performing arts, and instead followed her father's practical advice of attending college. She continued her education at UTSA, studying business and earning membership in the Beta Gamma Sigma business honor society. In 1982, Debi transferred to the University of Texas at Austin, but returned to San Antonio the same year to continue dating Ned, a fellow UTSA student whom she met in a Business Economics class. Debi and Ned formed a quick bond, sharing a love of an active lifestyle and their Catholic faith. After visiting Ned's family in the scenic Pacific Northwest in the summer of 1983, Debi and Ned wed on September 30, 1983 at St. Matthew Catholic Church. Three years later, the couple welcomed their daughter, Dona Michelle, named after one of Debi's best friends from high school. Although their marriage ended in 1997, Debi and Ned remained dear friends and partners in raising their daughter. In 1988, Debi graduated magna cum laude from UTSA with a BBA in dual majors of Marketing and Management. Debi was an avid learner and early in her studies, she discovered a newfound interest in technology and computers. While attending UTSA in the 1980s, Debi began working in the exciting and cutting-edge IT industry, which was in the midst of revolutionizing the work environment with personal computers. Debi went on to cultivate her career in marketing, sales, and IT at multiple Fortune 500 companies, including IBM, NYNEX, Motorola, and Clarke American. Debi was known as an enthusiastic, energetic, adept, and goal-oriented professional, always eager to work hard,

learn new skills, and do it all with a smile.

In 2004, Debi reconnected with Don Olenick, a friend from high school and college. Debi and Don were married from 2005-2013 while living in Kyle, TX. After working as a marketing director for a central Texas water management company, Debi decided to make a career change and become an educator in 2006. Debi earned her teaching certification in Special Education and English/Language Arts and served as an Instructional Aide and Content Mastery teacher at Hays ISD. She enjoyed working one-on-one with students to help them progress academically and grow their self-esteem, often supporting their extracurricular sports and art events.

Of the many positions Debi held over her career, none compared to the great joy and purpose she derived from the vocation of being Dona's mother. Debi relished being involved in Dona's childhood and school activities, serving as Girl Scout Cookie Manager and hosting many parties, sleepovers, and convertible rides for Dona's friends. Debi was a loving, caring, and fun mom who made great personal sacrifices so that Dona could receive a top-notch education in Catholic schools. Debi supported Dona's interests throughout her high school and college years, attending academic award banquets, ACTS Retreat Candlelights, and Catholic sorority family weekends. In Dona's adulthood, Debi would tell anyone and everyone who would listen how very proud she was of her daughter and her career at Roy Maas Youth Alternatives, a nonprofit serving abused and neglected children.

Never known to stand still for long, Debi's restless heart enjoyed a change of scenery and moving to a new place, even if she had not been there before or did not know anyone in the area. Debi was never in a room full of strangers and could make a friend of anyone with her charming wit, bountiful compliments, and beaming smile. In 2013, Debi relocated to Del Rio, where she enjoyed the peace and solitude of living in her "Rock Cottage" with views of the West Texas landscape. In Del Rio, Debi was a dedicated member of the classical choir at Sacred Heart Catholic Church and the Spanish choir at St.

Joseph Catholic Church, where she made many kind friends.

In 2019, Debi moved back to San Antonio, helping to look after her aging parents. During this time, she often sang with the Archdiocese of San Antonio choir at San Fernando Cathedral and various area parishes. Throughout the many joys and trials of her life, Debi used the gift of her voice as an expression of her enduring faith in our Heavenly Father. For proof of Debi's deep faith, one only needs to look to her bible – lovingly and fervently studied, with ragged dogeared pages, highlights, underlines, and notes written in the margins. She frequently inscribed her favorite encouraging verses in her letters and messages to friends and family, and always ended her conversations with “Vaya Con Dios”. Debi leaned on the Lord for strength and comfort, seeking Him in all things, and praying with a steadfast heart even in her final breaths.

In the last years of her life, Debi coined a name for herself – “Reboot Rose” – layered with meaning alluding to her career in technology of which she was so proud, her fondness for roses, and her persistent pursuit of reinventing herself. Debi had hope that it was never too late for a fresh start, all you had to do was power down and reboot!

Debi was an exceptionally talented and creative soul, multifaceted and complex, with a brilliant intellect, an incredible will, and an untamed spirit, which she channeled into several diverse interests and hobbies. In addition to her love of music and singing, Debi was a fitness enthusiast and dancer, often a familiar face in many a spinning or Zumba class. She loved to feel the wind in her hair while road cycling and participated in multiple charity rides such as the MS150. Debi enjoyed spending time outdoors in nature, especially near flowing rivers, at local parks and historic landmarks, under the shade of tall trees, and on snowy mountains. Debi loved learning and studying art, architecture, literature, and history. She was a lover of dogs, especially her precious pets Trixie and Frosty.

Debi was a true beauty, both inside and out, and she had a marvelous ability to make the things and people around her beautiful, too. Her style and taste in

home décor and fashion were undeniable. In the 1990's, Debi shared this gift of beauty and fed her entrepreneurial spirit as a Mary Kay consultant, and she found much joy in teaching and empowering women how to feel and look their best. Among Debi's most wonderful gifts was her ability to connect with others. Debi maintained close, special friendships over many miles and decades with best friends she made while in high school, college, gospel singing, Mary Kay, and other business ventures.

Debi was loved and cherished by so many as a daughter, mother, sister, aunt, and friend. Debi will forever be remembered for her beauty and charm, her brilliance and creativity, her many talents, her playful humor, but most especially her sweet spirit and sentimental, generous heart.

Debi is survived by her daughter, Dona Suing; sister, Christine Wigfield; brother, Rey Hernandez (Michelle); niece, Ann Hernandez; nephews, Kevin Perkins, Nick Perkins (Rachel), Joe Hernandez, and Jake Hernandez; former spouse, father of her daughter, and friend, Ned Suing; dear friend and "guardian angel", Teresa Blue Guerra (Frank); and many cousins, aunts, uncles, grandnieces, grandnephews, and special lifelong friends. Debi was preceded in death by her beloved parents and brother-in-law Roger Wigfield. Debi's life will be celebrated on Monday, May 6, 2024, with 9:30am Rosary and 10am Funeral Mass at St. Matthew Catholic Church, followed by reception, and procession to 1pm inurnment at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to St. Matthew School Tuition Assistance Fund, 10703 Wurzbach Rd, San Antonio, TX 78230; Roy Maas Youth Alternatives, 3103 West Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78213; NAMI San Antonio, 6800 Park Ten Blvd Ste 248-E, San Antonio, TX 78213; or the charity of your choice.

# Previous Events

## Holy Rosary

MAY 6. 9:30 AM (CT)

Saint Mathew Catholic Church  
10703 Wurzbach Rd  
San Antonio, Tx 78230

## Mass of Resurrection

MAY 6. 10:00 AM (CT)

Saint Mathew Catholic Church  
10703 Wurzbach Rd  
San Antonio, Tx 78230

# Tribute Wall

CR

“Debbie was such a great person. I met her in choir at Ohn Narshall high school. I learned alot about how to channel range with your voice with her. How never to be scared to pull out that inner voice in you. Over 3 decades later I met her again after years of myself in the engineering field and found her on facebook. Not really but being an acquaintance to her but through choir she recognized me and I her and she just picked me up and we talked so much. About life and achieving goals, ect. Debbie was always an overachiever and always helping others. I was going through the worst time of my medical of having lung cancer and she taught me how to capture the word of God again in support. I really loved talking to her. She gave me such independence to be a stronger person. I got so strong and more active with my self esteem and she was busy too that we just got busy and talk less then I saw she past away. I was sadden then felt so guilty but then I thought, "Wait, this is how Debbie wanted me to be! Strong enough to know I can live on my words as well as hers". What a mentor. Thank you Lord, for sharing such a great soul in this world because she touched so many people. She shared so many stories if her disappointments with people but never once said anything bad about anyone but would say, "I always leave it in Gods hands!" I am always going to miss you Debbie because you brought me back to life and Since you I have been paying foward in your honor and in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

CHRISTINE ANNETTE RAMON  
CLASS OF 1980

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Christine Ramon - May 23, 2024 at 12:50 PM

DS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Dona Suing - May 07, 2024 at 02:08 PM

CR

*Oh Dona, I'm so sorry. I just found out. May perpetual light shine upon your dear Mother, as she finds rest in the arms of Jesus 🙏 Surrounding you in prayer dear friend.*

Cassandra Rodriguez - May 09, 2024 at 08:55 AM

DS

“ 86 files added to the album Memorial Slideshow



Dona Suing - May 07, 2024 at 01:00 PM

TG

“ On the Eve before your Rosary and Mass, I’m thinking of you and missing you dearly. You were the very first one to greet me on the bus our first day of Junior year at Marshall. You got a car before I did and we had some great rides together to and from school! We had no idea that one day we would be in each others weddings and your beautiful daughter, Dona, would be my flower girl. Time passes and we get busy living our lives, but a true friendship endures. Before the convenience of emails, we called each other and kept in touch with letters and cards. There may have been some long stretches between visits but the conversation would always pick up like it was yesterday. I will always remember your beautiful voice, a gift you shared with the Gospel choirs, and I’ll hold dear the time spent with you recently filled with many joyous moments. You were so loved by so many and they will forever treasure their time with you. May peace be with you now.

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**Teresa Guerra** - May 05, 2024 at 11:55 PM

KR

“ I’m Dona’s Aunt Kati, sister of Ned, Debi’s first husband and friend. Debi was so funny and what a great singing and speaking voice. We laughed a lot; those will be my memories of her. Eternal rest grant unto Debi, Oh Lord, and let perpetual life shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen!  
Kati Rock, on behalf of Mike, San, and Henry Rock

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**kati Rock** - May 03, 2024 at 08:49 PM

KR

Sam not San

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**Kati Rock** - May 03, 2024 at 09:09 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Debra Kay Hopper Suing.*



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May 03, 2024 at 08:34 PM



“ *Mike, Kati, Sam, and Henry Rock planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debra Kay Hopper Suing.*

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**Mike, Kati, Sam, and Henry Rock** - May 03, 2024 at 08:34 PM



“ *Debi was one of my closest friends in high school, and I've been blessed to have her in my life since then. When I moved to San Antonio as the "new girl", she enveloped me with her love and generosity, ensuring my high school experience was wonderful. She remade me from a gawky adolescent to a cool teen. When I moved back to the midwest after graduation, we frequently exchanged chatty letters, and continued with visits almost annually. Despite her challenges, her optimism and deep faith were inspirational, and she made me feel the same unconditional love as when we were 15. I will always love you Debi, and will keep in my heart your infectious giggles and your generous heart.*

*Laura Ramm Dunne*

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**Laura** - May 03, 2024 at 03:25 PM

LD

“ Laura Ramm Dunne purchased the Heavenly Heights Bouquet for the family of Debra Kay Hopper Suing.



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Laura Ramm Dunne - May 03, 2024 at 03:04 PM

LD

“ Laura Ramm Dunne planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debra Kay Hopper Suing.

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Laura Ramm Dunne - May 03, 2024 at 03:04 PM

LG

“ I met Debi in highschool. I was a freshman that she took under her wing. She was active with the church in Del Rio and back here in SA. She was a good friend for many years. I hope the end was peaceful and surrounded by the ones that she loved. I will miss her friendship. Via con Dios.

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Luis Garza - May 02, 2024 at 05:40 PM

CH

“ I saddened to hear of your passing, and pray you are at peace now. I went to a church event to hear you sing a few years ago, you still sounded so lovely, and we went to dinner and talked about our beautiful daughters and the challenges you were facing. No more, sweet spirited lady. You can rejoice eternally.

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Christina - May 02, 2024 at 03:28 PM

UN

“ Until we reunite. Love, Ned purchased the *Ocean Breeze Spray* for the family of Debra Kay Hopper Suing.



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**Until we reunite. Love, Ned** - May 02, 2024 at 02:36 PM

UN

“ Until we reunite. Love, Ned planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debra Kay Hopper Suing.

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**Until we reunite. Love, Ned** - May 02, 2024 at 02:36 PM

TF

“ Teresa and Frank purchased the *Beautiful in Blue* for the family of Debra Kay Hopper Suing.



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**Teresa and Frank** - May 01, 2024 at 11:54 PM