



## Diane Marie Becker (nee Demarest) Sc.D.

March 27, 1943 - November 17, 2021

After a lengthy battle with breast cancer, Diane M. Becker passed away peacefully at her home in Baltimore, Maryland on November 17, 2021 at the age of 78 with family at her side. She is survived by her husband Dr. Lewis C. Becker, daughter Kirsten M. Becker of Los Angeles, brother Martin J. Demarest of Albany, NY, and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was born in Warwick, New York on March 27, 1943, the daughter of Lucile Swartwout and John Smith Demarest of Greenwood Lake, New York. Dr. Becker began her career as a nurse, a 1964 graduate of the Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing, followed by 17 years as the nursing director of intensive care units in London, Boston, and Chapel Hill, NC. Compelled by a desire to address public health of the communities she served, she completed both an MPH and doctoral degree at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. She was recruited to the faculty of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1984, specializing in cardiovascular disease prevention research. She was the first nurse to receive a primary academic appointment in the School of Medicine and was nationally recognized as an expert in the management of coronary disease risk factors and lipid disorders. Working closely with her husband, she founded the Johns Hopkins Sibling and Family Heart Study (now known as GeneSTAR), a family study of genetic and lifestyle risk factors for early heart attacks, with over 4000 participants from two generations now followed for over 35 years. It is the only family study

of its kind in the country.

Dr. Becker was a creative and visionary health professional, partnering with pastors from 250 East Baltimore churches to form the award-winning Heart, Body, and Soul, Inc. an independent nonprofit organization designed to create real world healthcare delivery alternatives in inner city African American communities. Working closely with CURE, Clergy United for Renewal in East Baltimore, Dr Becker was a pioneer in community medicine and was known for her work to improve opportunities for community members to enter health careers. In her 60 years at Johns Hopkins, her work to reduce health disparities was recognized with numerous national awards. In 1995, she was awarded a prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellowship and served on the US Senate Committee for Medicare and Low Income Families. She was a sought-after mentor of medical students, post-doctoral fellows, and junior faculty and directed a unique Federal Health Policy Clerkship in which Hopkins medical students were placed in Congressional or Executive offices in Washington, DC.

After retirement in 2018, she was a fierce advocate and active volunteer for underprivileged children in the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic she did intensive work on the Hopkins Academy's fundraising effort for the Henderson-Hopkins school.

Diane remained deeply committed to the Hopkins School of Nursing and was extraordinarily grateful for the scholarship that launched her career.

Dr. Becker was a passionate gardener and photographer, a lover of words and music with a sharp wit and a creative spirit.

Funeral services are being planned and will be announced at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family is asking tribute gifts to be sent to Martha's Vineyard Community Services (<https://www.mvcommunityservices.org/>), a non-profit organization providing a wide range of community health services on Martha's Vineyard, an island very dear to Diane. Alternatively, donations can be made to the Susan G. Komen organization whose mission is to prevent and cure breast cancer (<https://www.komen.org/>).

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On November 17, 2021 Diane Marie Becker Sc.D. (nee Demarest) beloved wife of Lewis Charles Becker M.D.; dear mother of Kirsten Marie Becker; devoted sister of Martin Demarest.

A Memorial Service will be held in Los Angeles, CA at a later date.

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# Tribute Wall

DF

“ *Diane was one of my first collaborators at Hopkins. She was such a gem - a gifted researcher, mentor, and advocate as well as a wonderful human. I am so grateful for the opportunity to have known her and worked with her. I will forever remember her with admiration, gratitude, and love.*

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**Dani Fallin** - November 23, 2021 at 09:13 AM

TM

“ *My condolences. May her memory be a blessing to your family.*

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**T. Murray** - November 23, 2021 at 09:04 AM

BC

“ *I met Diane when we both worked for the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. I always enjoyed working with and for Diane, as she was so soft spoken and I always admired her manor in how she taught the nursing school students, gentle and firm at the same time. Diane and Lew needed a babysitter at the time for Kirsten and lo and behold, the great friendship began between my sister-in-law, Mary Jo Siebert and the Becker family. Little did I know at the time, that I opened the door to what remains to this day, a loving and beautiful relationship. I always have and will have fond memories of you Diane. Love, Betty Siebert Chasin*

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**Betty Siebert Chasin** - November 23, 2021 at 01:21 AM

CH

“ I met Diane while she was a doctoral student in the School of Hygiene and Public Health (its prior name a long time ago!). I was working in the Division of Health Education at the time for David Levine. So many fond memories through the years. Conference meeting trips to Dallas and Victoria when I worked for Diane gave me many opportunities and experiences. She will be missed.

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**Christine G Holzmueller** - November 19, 2021 at 06:58 AM

JS

“ Condolences to Lew and Kirsten on the loss of this wonderful woman. Diane was dedicated to her profession and spread her knowledge to everyone she could touch in her lifetime. She was intelligent, funny and it was a pleasure to be with her. We will always remember you Diane. Love, Jan and Roy Siebert

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**Janet Siebert** - November 18, 2021 at 06:01 PM