

Donna Marie DALY-NISSON

August 27, 1956 – August 14, 2020



Donna Marie Daly Nisson passed away unexpectedly on August 14, 2020. She was born to Marie Salomone and Anthony Daly in Philadelphia, PA on August 27, 1956. She was an army brat and the eldest of 3 sisters. During Donna's early years, her family lived on different bases throughout the United States and Europe. Eventually, the family settled down in Palos Verdes Estates, CA, and she graduated from Palos Verdes High School in 1974. She graduated from U.C. Irvine in 1978 and, after a year of waitressing in Heavenly Valley and Maui, she attended the University of San Francisco School of Law. She graduated near the top of her class (Cum Laude) in 1982 and co-authored an article on maritime law which was published in the U.S.F. Law Review. While in law school she met her husband Tim and the two began to fall in love. After a year in a general law practice in

Oakland, Donna and Tim moved to Redding where Donna joined the Shasta County District Attorney's office. She was the only woman attorney in the District Attorney's office and one of just a handful of women lawyers in Shasta County. Like the bulldog she was, she proudly and courageously bucked the "good old boy" system. Donna soon developed what would become a lifetime passion for criminal justice and the rights of victims. Based on her keen intelligence and incredible work ethic she rose quickly through the ranks. She aggressively prosecuted violent felons, including child molesters, rapists, and murderers. She successfully tried three death penalty cases, including the murder of a police officer in the line of duty. The greatest miracle of Donna's life happened on March 19, 1997 when she gave birth to her daughter Haley. Donna was a loving and doting mother who could never do enough for Haley. She was involved in every aspect of Haley's life. No matter how tired or stressed out or overworked, Donna would always drop everything for Haley. She volunteered at school and sporting events, and made sure Haley was pointed in the right direction. Donna taught Haley how to be a strong woman: how to speak her mind and never back down, how to know right from wrong and stand on the side of righteousness. She taught her to balance hard work and determination with kindness and compassion. Because of Donna, Haley has become an intelligent, empathetic, and beautiful young woman who Donna was so justly proud of. After taking time off for Haley, Donna returned to her career as a prosecutor. In addition to Shasta County, she worked for the Tehama and Glenn County District Attorney's offices. On the first day of the Carr fire, she interviewed for the vacant position of Trinity County District Attorney. She was unanimously chosen over other well qualified applicants by the Board of Supervisors. Donna loved her job as the Trinity County D.A. and happily put in 70-hour work weeks to protect crime victims. Donna was a skilled and fearless lawyer who backed down from no one. There have been very few prosecutors with her depth and breadth of experience, and she took pride in mentoring younger lawyers. As passionate as she was about her career she was even more so about her family. She hosted huge holiday events which lasted days, where over 30 people were seated for dinners. She lovingly planned and prepared for these events for months and made sure every individual's wants and needs were taken care of. She was a great cook and consummate hostess. She was a generous, loving, and much loved, daughter, sister, wife, mother, niece, aunt, and cousin. Donna loved to entertain and had many good friends whom she treated like her own family. She loved to laugh, yell, drink wine, dance, listen to loud music, and play card and board games. She loved to be right and to be in charge. She was a passionate debater who used colorful language and lovingly called her husband Tim a "candy-ass liberal". Donna loved children and they loved her. She is well loved and will be deeply missed by so many of Haley's friends, several of whom

referred to her as their “second mom”. She gave lots of presents and, at Christmas time, Advent calendars. Always Advent calendars. When Tim was coaching Haley’s U8 soccer team, Donna brought to each game a bag of toys and every time a child came out of the game she gave her a present. The girls liked sitting on the bench as much as they liked playing the game. Donna leaves behind Tim, her husband of 36 years, her beloved daughter Haley, her parents, Ron and Marie Davis, her mother-in-law Sharon Nisson, her sisters Cindy Daly (Nancy), Brenda Daly (Johanna), and Laura Daly, and her brothers Anthony Daly, III, and Christopher Daly. She leaves behind her godson, Taylor Manuel, who called her his “fairy godmother”. She leaves behind a large, extended family of uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews, all of whom adored her. In her wake, Donna leaves a massive void. There has never been anyone like her and to say she will be greatly missed is an understatement. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the following:

1. Empowertehama.org - Donna volunteered for this organization advocating on behalf of victims of Domestic Violence
2. Ican-foundation.org - Donna was passionate about advocating for victim’s rights.