

Diane Dernoncourt Canavan passed away peacefully on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, surrounded by her family and friends. Diane was born in Oklahoma City, OK, to Willard and Nora Dernoncourt. She was raised in Oklahoma City, where she excelled academically at an early age. In 1973, she graduated from Putnam City High School as valedictorian of her graduating class of 972 students, an achievement that reflected her intelligence, dedication and strong work ethic. She attended the University of Oklahoma, where she received her B.S. in Education with honors in 1977 and her Master's degree in Reading in 1979. She went on to complete a PhD in Reading Education at North Texas University in 1992.

In the final year of her doctorate, at the request of several colleagues, she published "Using Children's Books in Reading/Language Arts Programs," which was used in various schools in Oklahoma. While at the University of Oklahoma, she was an active member of the Kappa Delta sorority. It was her sorority sister Mary who arranged a blind date for her with John Canavan, the man she would love through 48 years of marriage.

The couple moved to Shawnee, OK, in September of 1979. At that time, Diane was working for the State Department of Education, traveling around central Oklahoma advising middle and elementary schools on reading curriculums. In 1985, Diane gave birth to their daughter, Aimee, who would be a constant joy and source of pride for the rest of her life.

Following the birth of her daughter, Diane moved into teaching and began working in the Shawnee school system and later McCloud schools. Within 6 years, she was asked to be an associate professor of reading at the University of Central Oklahoma, where she developed future teachers in reading instruction. In 2009, she retired from teaching to care for her beloved mother.

During their life together, Diane and John shared their twin passions of traveling and reading. Together, they traveled to more than 40 countries and 48 of the 50 states. Diane loved to experience the world from as many perspectives and cultures as possible. She was adventurous, passionate, fun, and had the biggest heart of anyone you would ever meet. She also loved going on girls' trips with her dear friends Lee, Stacy, Terri, Michele, Jody, Mary, Kathy, and Jennifer.

Despite her stroke in 2022, which severely impaired her speech, her personality never changed, no matter where she was. She would go up to total strangers and warmly strike up a conversation. John loved to watch her up to her usual antics. Diane's speech did not stop them from sitting at home for hours talking about any and everything in their own special language. Even while her health was declining towards the end of her life, she continued to brighten the lives of those around her.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Willard and Nora Dernoncourt. She is survived by her husband, John, and her daughter, Aimee and her sister and brother-in-law, Debbie and John Benson. She is also survived by three brothers-in-law and their spouses: Richard and Karen Canavan, Barry and Ann Canavan, and Jim and Peggy Canavan as well as nine nieces and nephews: Grant Benson and his wife Katherine, Megan Wallace and her husband Brett, Nick Canavan and his wife Elizabeth, Kaitlyn McKenney and her husband Robert, Steven Canavan, Rachel Canavan, John Williamson, Whitney Canavan, and Brian Canavan.

The family would like to express their thanks and appreciation to the doctors, nurses, and support staff at Oklahoma Heart Hospital South for their compassionate care of Diane in her final days. They would also like to express their heartfelt thanks to Shawnee police officers and REACT ambulance technicians for their quick response and care for Diane.

Diane will always be remembered for her beauty, optimism, and outgoing personality. When God called her home, the world got a little less bright, but the family is comforted by the knowledge that she is reunited with her parents in Heaven.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Diane's name to the American Heart Association.

In Loving Memory Of *Diane Canavan*



January 5, 1955



June 9, 2026



Let Me Go

*When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want to rites in a doom filled room
Why cry for a soul set free?*

*Miss me a little, but not for long
And not with your head bowed low
Remember the love that once we shared
Miss me, but let me go.*

*For this is a journey we all must take
And each must go alone.
It's all apart of the master plan
A step on the road to home.*

*When you are lonely and sick at heart
go to the friends we know.
Laugh at all the things we used to do
Miss me, but let me go.*

*-Christina Rossetti-
(1830-1896)*

Diane Canavan

Date of Birth
January 5, 1955
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Entered into Rest
June 9, 2026
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Mass of Christian Burial
Friday, June 26, 2026
Ten O'clock in the Morning
St. Benedict Catholic Church
Shawnee, Oklahoma

Celebrant
Reverend Benjamin Bandanadam

Organist
Carolyn Taron

Musical Selections
"It Is Well With My Soul"
"Ave Maria"
"Gift of Finest Wheat"
"I Know My Redeemer Lives"