



Barbara Marie Sharp

April 27, 1959 - January 13, 2026

Barbara Sharp, 66, passed away peacefully at her home in Santa Barbara on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, after living with cerebellar ataxia. She was a pioneering engineer, an intrepid traveler, a lifelong Deadhead, and a devoted sister, mother, and friend.

Born in Denver, Colorado, Barbara moved with her family to San Jose in 1962. She attended St. Christopher Elementary and Presentation High School before heading to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering in 1982. She later completed coursework for a Master's degree in Systems Engineering at San Jose State University. After a brief time in Irvine, Barbara settled in Santa Barbara, where she would live for many years.

Barbara built a remarkable career in infrared and thermal imaging technology; a field she helped define. Beginning at General Dynamics and IBM, she moved through Seagate Magnetics and Raytheon before joining Amber Engineering in Goleta in 1990, where she helped transform a research-focused company into a manufacturing powerhouse. In 2000, she joined Indigo Systems, a company at the forefront of microbolometer and uncooled infrared detector development and became manager of the growing Engineering group and when FLIR Systems acquired Indigo she became Special Projects Leader under the FLIR CTO. During this period, she was part

of the team that developed the Lepton camera, a ground-breaking infrared camera that enabled the first use of a thermal camera in a cell phone.

Barbara continued her work in the CTO group until her retirement in 2016. Over her career, she was named as co-inventor on more than 60 patents in infrared camera technology and microbolometers - innovations that have found their way into everything from military night-vision equipment to automotive safety systems to wildlife conservation efforts. She was known among colleagues for her energetic, hands-on management style and she always found a way to approach even the most difficult problems with a positive attitude and a problem-solving approach.

But Barbara's sense of adventure extended far beyond the laboratory. She was fascinated by auroras and traveled repeatedly to Alaska, Canada, and Finland to witness them, using her expertise with cameras to capture stunning images. These trips held special meaning - her mother Virginia had been a nurse in the Alaskan interior in the early 1950s, and Barbara followed in her footsteps by taking a multi-day dog sled trip in winter, just as her mother had done decades before in Kotzebue. After retiring, Barbara bought a motorhome and embarked on a series of road trips to visit every National Park in the United States.

She and her sister JoAnn were constant traveling companions, whether journeying to Baja California to see gray whales, chasing northern lights across the Arctic, or their capstone trip to Africa; a months-long safari staying in lodges, tent camping and a Chobe River photography cruise. Barb joined her nephew Garrison on an epic adventure through all of Eastern Europe, Germany, France, and Italy, and took nephew Sean to New Zealand for Hobbits and glaciers. Barbara had a gift for bringing people along on her adventures - there was always room for one more.

Her son Justin, born in June 1982, was the center of her world. From his earliest days, he was part of whatever adventure Barbara had planned. When he was barely six months old, she flew with him to meet her brother Michael when he got out of the Navy in 1983, and together they drove across the country visiting relatives and friends. That same year, while camping at Prairie Creek Redwoods with Michael and a friend, Barbara's determination got the better of her when she tried to photograph a large Roosevelt elk guarding his herd. The elk chased her into the bushes - Michael had to hand baby Justin off and run to her rescue, throwing rocks to drive the animal away. They laughed about it for years afterward. Justin preceded Barbara in death in the spring of 2007.

Barbara loved dogs of all kinds, and there was always one by her side. Of all her beloved companions, Mariah held the closest place in her heart.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents, DeWayne and Virginia Sharp, and her son Justin. She is survived by her brother Michael Sharp, her sister JoAnn Rogers, and her nephews Sean Rogers and Garrison Sharp, and her niece Madeline Olesen.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Ray Dolby Brain Health Center at CPMC in honor of Barbara. Checks should be made out to "CPMC Foundation" with "Dolby Center" in the memo line and then mailed to CPMC Foundation, 2015 Steiner St., San Francisco, CA 94115. You can also donate online at cpmc.org/givenow-brainhealth.

Previous Events

Rosary

JAN 28. 5:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Downtown
15 E. Sola St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

Funeral Mass

JAN 29. 10:00 AM (PT)

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church
21 E Sola Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Reception

JAN 29. 11:30 AM (PT)

The Ellwood at Goleta Beach
5905 Sandspit Rd
Goleta, CA 93117

Graveside Service

JAN 30. 10:00 AM (PT)

Cayucos-Morro Bay District Cemetery
2451 Ocean Blvd
Cayucos, CA 93430

Reception

JAN 30. 11:00 AM (PT)

Lunada Garden Bistro
78 N. Ocean Ave
Cayucos, CA 93430

Tribute Wall

PC

“ Goodbye dear friend thanks for all the good memories.

Paul Costanza - January 30 at 04:51 PM

JR

“ <https://youtu.be/J9JJyvrN43o?feature=shared>

JoAnn Rogers - January 24 at 12:03 PM

CW

Joann, this movie is perfect. I love seeing your beautiful sister moving through all these phases of her life. I am most honored to have spend some fabulous time with her. I will miss her. Sending lots of love

Connie Warner - January 24 at 01:55 PM

CW

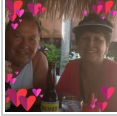
“ Awe DAMN😭😭😭😭. So sorry to read this needs. Barb and I have been friends since the 80s when we worked at Raytheon Goleta together. She was an amazing person, friend, mother, sister, and human on our planet. She came out to our wedding in Montana in 2015 and was such a joy! Helpful beyond measure, lovingly video taping it all, bringing her infectious laugh to us all.

This picture below is one I found of Barb cuddling our new dog Junior at our wedding.

Holding you all in my heart.



Connie Warner - January 24 at 11:48 AM



*My deepest condolences! 💔
She suffered so much. I loved are conversations she would share
about her wonderful adventures. 💕*

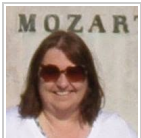
Mary Ellen Chacon - January 24 at 01:51 PM



“ *Carolyn Shield sent a virtual gift in memory of
Barbara Marie Sharp*



Carolyn Shield - January 22 at 10:33 AM



“ *Barbara was the sweetest cousin who
supported her family any way she could. Her
silly cousins wrote a book, and she gave them
an awesome review. God bless her and her
family. She will be missed. Our condolences
and prayers to my sweet cousins. Carolyn Schield family and sons*

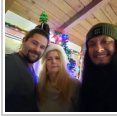


Carolyn Shield - January 22 at 10:31 AM



*Liebe Carolyn,
wir sind so traurig über den Tod von Barbara 😞.
Wir behalten sie in guter Erinnerung, sie war ein wunderbarer Mensch.
Wir durften sie kennenlernen bei ihrem Besuch in Deutschland.
Unser Mitgefühl gilt der ganzen Familie.
Liebe Grüße aus Deutschland von Josef, Brigitte, Jojo und Simone mit
Kindern. 🕯*

Brigitte Vorbeck - January 24 at 05:17 AM



Barb was the most selfless person I ever had in my life. She took a year of her life and took care of me while waiting for a liver transplant. She rented an apartment in San Francisco for a month to stay in after I received my liver. She stayed the whole five weeks with me. Her and Jo Ann have helped me in so many ways. I love them both and felt as a sister. Barb will forever be in my heart.

Kelly Bartlett - January 24 at 02:10 PM



I remember Barb as a gifted engineer, steady leader, and dear friend. In a small company, the impact of one person can be enormous – and hers was. Much of what was built at Amber and Indigo carries her fingerprints. I will miss her and am grateful to have walked part of the road with her.

Jeff Frank - January 25 at 04:15 PM