

Sunrise:
April 1973

Sunset:
January 2021

IN LOVING MEMORY

Dana M. Diaz



Above Picture Caption: Dana wearing a teal/green top; smiling looking at camera (19 years old)

Dana was a tenacious and vivacious woman who will leave an imprint on the lives of so many who knew and loved her. Even after going blind, she set out on a path to continue to live her life with and on purpose. She learned braille; acquired career preparation skills; and learned how to cook, travel, and live independently as a blind person. Dana attended State and National conventions to network, learn about new technologies for the blind, and increase awareness about legislative initiatives to protect the rights of blind people.

As a member of the Greater Baltimore Chapter of the Maryland National Federation of the Blind (MD NFB), Dana travelled to Annapolis, Maryland with other advocates to support and promote the advancement of these initiatives.

She not only served on various committees with the MD NFB, she was also an active board member of the i3s Foundation, Inc., a grass-roots organization committed to providing services, resources and support for blind persons, those with low vision, and people with disabilities. Dana was excited about her role as a Board member and the new initiatives and programs i3s Foundation, Inc. was planning and preparing to implement.

The family asks that in lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in the “memory of Dana Diaz” to:

i3s Foundation, Inc. at www.i3sfoundationinc.org

National Federation of the Blind of Maryland at www.nfbmd.org

CELEBRATION OF LIFE MEMORIAL SERVICES

*Wednesday, February 17, 2021
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM*

Order of Service

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Welcome</i> | <i>Erika Conerly, Cousin</i> |
| <i>Scripture Reading:</i> | <i>Barbara L. Elzey, Aunt/Godmother 2 Corinthians 5:7 2 Timothy 4:7</i> |
| <i>Prayer of Comfort:</i> | <i>Warren W. Watkins, III, Cousin</i> |
| <i>Musical Selection:</i> | <i>Angelique Robinson, Goddaughter “Glory Glory/I’ll Fly Away Medley”</i> |
| <i>Reading:</i> | <i>“About Dana”</i> |
| <i>Video:</i> | <i>“In Loving Memory of Dana M. Diaz”</i> |
| <i>Expressions:</i> | <i>Open to All</i> |
| <i>Tribute:</i> | <i>Charlene W. Carmon, Sister</i> |
| <i>Closing Prayer:</i> | <i>Vera Hollingsworth, Cousin</i> |

REMEMBRANCES & REFLECTIONS

Dana was a rare soul. She was genuine, positive and curious about so many things. Her challenges never held her back! She always wanted to learn new things and share her knowledge. If I was feeling unhappy and talked to Dana, I would quickly get myself together, because if she could be a light, then so could I! She is an inspiration. -Senta Boardley

She was like a daughter. I'll miss her calling, apologizing for calling me in the middle of the day to ask about a recipe. -Gloria McRae.

I keep seeing her in a yellow shorts set at one of the family events; she looked so pretty. She set up the trip when we all went to Disney World. With family, she was all in. She was a fighter and an encourager. I loved her inside jokes. Will miss you Dana. -Yvette Mulkey

I will miss her. She was the first person that welcomed me into the family. And she will be remembered by so many people as she touched everyone's heart everywhere she went. RIP Dana. -Christina Araujo

She was such an amazing person. You will be missed Dana! -Isabel Araujo

I admired her strength and her sense of humor. RIP my sister till we meet again. -Mary Diaz

Dana always has brought life and joy everywhere she went. Her convos and laughs are a vivid memory in my mind. -Fateema Blackwell

She was a Phenomenal person that I was blessed to know. Rest in Perfect Peace Dana Diaz. Love You Cuz'n!!! -Michelle Diaz Williams

Dana was one of a kind... kindred spirit. -Kate Linton

Dana was unlike any one I've ever known. She was a loving, unselfish young woman who had such an exuberance for life that was infectious to all whom she encountered. Her faith was her life's fuel, and when she was handed lemons, she always made lemonade. RIHP Dana. -Vivian Whitaker

I pray that I will be able to live life with the same tenacity as my cousin Dana did- making the most of every ounce of strength, every moment of time, and every gift/talent/ability that has been graciously given to me. -Vera Hollingsworth

I'm honored that I had the opportunity to hang out with Dana! One of God's most beautiful people anyone would have ever met. -Nina Bagley

She was one of my first friends when I joined Lincoln Park United Methodist Church. She was a wonderful friend & will be deeply missed. -Gloria Duarte



Above Picture Caption: Dana standing wearing grey jacket with matching shorts and black shoes. (Dana in her early 20's)

*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.
Psalm 139:14*

Below Picture Caption: Dana as a baby crawling on floor wearing white top and pink pants with pink hair bows.



I Was Not Expecting Dana Diaz

I first met Dana 13 years ago while she was enrolling in the Blind Industry Services of Maryland (BISM). My classmates and I were on our way to a school assignment. All the other students had passed Dana and her family except for my classmate Melanie (who would later become Dana’s roommate) and me. Melanie said, “hello” then I said, “hello”, then Dana and her family said,”hi!”. This would begin a 13 year friendship that would last our lifetime.

One memory I recall was at the Texas National Convention where we were given assignments like finding seminar rooms throughout the hotel. This was a grueling task as a blind person. At this time Dana had very little traveling skills and she would get caught up in the hotel decorations like the elephant pottery. Dana would get so tangled up that she got confused and would start fussing out the pottery! We would all chuckle as Dana tried to figure things out and she did. Even though we were exhausted by the end of the day, Dana never complained. She was determined and eager to accomplish every task and was not afraid to face her challenges head on.

Once you leave BISM there is no one who really understands what you put up with when dealing with “normal society.” I grew up with a crew of friends from childhood thinking these would be my only friends. I was not expecting Dana Diaz. God has a funny way of moving you along in life; He granted me the one opportunity I had not experienced with my childhood friends: a bond and closeness I never achieved with others. Dana was easygoing and unoffensive and this made it easy for us to grow a close bond with one another.

Dana’s legacy is her compassion for others. When Dana’s roommate, Melanie, left the program and never came back, we later found out that she had passed away. Melanie’s family did not rush back to the apartment to retrieve her things but, with no hesitation, Dana kindly gathered her roommate’s things and packed them up for the family’s retrieval because she felt it was the right thing to do. She had so much compassion for the family.

Dana will be so missed but, we can carry her in our hearts as we live our lives. Good night my sweet friend. I love you and will miss you all the days of my life. Well done, Dana!!!
-Sherry Gaskins



Above Picture Caption: Dana was one of 2,480 NFB members and supporters who, on July 8, 2015, set the Guinness World Record for the world’s largest umbrella mosaic “Live the Life You Want”. Picture Credit: guinnessworldrecord.com

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

I am Dana’s state president for the National Federation of the Blind, and she was a deeply cherished and vital member of our family. I remember one national convention in Florida, where I was fortunate enough to spend a great deal of time with her, getting to know her and just talking about everything. She was so tenacious and resilient and funny. Rest in power.
-Ronza Othman, President

Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Pennsylvania

To the family of Dana Diaz: The members of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Pennsylvania are thinking of you and wishing you peace and comfort as we celebrate Dana’s amazing life with you. Many of us got to meet Dana through National and State events that were sponsored through the NFB. We also had the privilege of spending enjoyable times when she came to Philadelphia to visit our member Sherry Gaskins. Dana was an amazing lady and we will keep you in our thoughts and prayers. We feel honored to have known her. Please feel free to call on Greater Philly (as we are affectionately known) if you need anything. Dana will be missed by many, but we hope that you will find comfort in the memories that you have which are everlasting.

Sorrowfully Submitted,
Denice Brown - Chapter President

i3s Foundation, Inc.

We, the members of i3s Foundation, Inc. would like to offer our deepest heartfelt sympathy and condolences. As an organization, we are saddened to have lost one of our most distinguished board members, Ms. Dana Diaz. Not only was she an example to all of us but she was a friend, advocate, mentor, and an example of a person not allowing their disability to slow them down. Ms. Diaz contributed greatly to the building of our website which gave many people access to our award-winning programs and support groups. We will truly miss her strength and dedication to our cause. We will honor all her hard work by continuing to carry on with what she envisioned for us to do within our communities. Thank you for allowing us to share and enjoy Ms. Dana Diaz’s life! Once again, we offer our condolences and if there is anything we can do to show support, please let us know. We are keeping her family and loved ones in heartfelt prayer. May God bless you.

-Sincerely, Joyce Brooks

It’s time to say goodbye to this one sweet spirit that God has blessed us with for mini years. In the short amount of time that I have known you we have had some very meaningful conversations. I appreciate all the knowledge and wisdom you have given me in teaching me about the business. You had a heart to do nothing but help people and you have truly helped me, so I will take all that I have learned from you and combine it with God’s knowledge and walk in my destiny. I appreciate you and our very meaningful spiritual conversations. Needless to say, you made your mark, not just with me, but with many others that have known you and admired you. Rest well my sweet angel.

-Tyrina McGill, Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind.

Word has reached me that Dana has been called to dwell among the angels. Janet and I were saddened to hear this news. Please know that Dana was a beautiful spirit and we never experienced a dull moment with her. It was a providential privilege being her pastor and a divine delight just knowing her. To the family, in the words of James Weldon Johnson:

"Weep not, weep not! She is not dead. She is resting in the bosom of Jesus."

Sleep on Dana and take your rest.
We loved you but God loved you best.

- Pastor Harold Desantis Lewis



Above Picture Caption: Dana wearing orange top at family cookout standing with grandfather and two aunts. Dana is singing into microphone with hand raised. (Dana in her mid-30's)

Safely Home

Author Unknown

*I am home in Heaven dear ones;
Oh so happy and oh so bright!
There is perfect joy and beauty,
in the everlasting light.*

*All the pain and grief is over,
Every restless tossing passed;
I am now at peace forever,
Safely home in Heaven at last*

*Did you wonder why I so calmly trod
the valley of the shade?
Oh, but Jesus' love illuminated
every dark and fear full glade.*

*And He came Himself to meet me
in the way so hard to tread.*

*And with Jesus' arm to lean on
Then you must not grieve so sorely,
For I love you dearly still,
Try to look beyond earth's shadow
Pray to trust our Fathers's will.*

*There is still work waiting for you
So you must not idly stand;
"Do It Now" while life remained,
you shall "Rest In Jesus's land"*

*When that work is all completed,
He will gently call you home,
Oh, the rapture of that meeting
and the joy to see you come.*

My Friend, My Sister

Your will to fight was beyond what I have ever seen for myself. You came into our lives just as you entered Glory: quiet yet POWERFUL. From day one you stood alongside me and helped me with each one of my kids and it went from my kids to OUR KIDS, you became godmother to Angelique and auntie to Ashley and Aaron. I thank GOD for allowing your mother to see something in me to ask me to be your friend just to get you to come to church. I am thankful your sister did not find it robbery to allow me into the fold and become part of the family. I have memories to last a lifetime and then some. I will keep putting one foot in front of the other knowing you are watching and rooting for me.

Dana, I love you beyond words, I will miss you. I cherish every step we took along the 27 years.

Sleep in peace my sister. Until we meet again.

Love Always,

Cheryl, Ashley, Angelique, and Aaron

*A man who has friends must himself be friendly,
But there is a friend who sticks closer than a
brother. Proverbs 18:24*

Double Trouble

RIP DayDay. We were teen sweethearts. Very talented with your musical instruments. Me in Drama. A duo too silly to be serious. That led to our nickname with the use of our first name initials D and T "Double Trouble". Friends in our adult years led to more silly antics. You and your family were the best. I will try not to selfishly be sad that you are gone from us because those close to you know and understand the mega hurdles and obstacles you've gone through with your health but relieved that you are now at peace. We've talked at length about your struggles and how I admired your will to fight and not give up. No fire I fought in my career as a firefighter stack up to the courage you fought for your health. You are one gritty woman- an inspiration. You will be missed and not forgotten. Look in on us from time to time.
-Half of D&T, "TROUBLE". -Toree Holmes

The Tribute

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