



## Mary Frances Baxter

February 28, 1958 - December 31, 2025

Mary Frances 'Francie' Baxter, PhD, OT, FAOTA, professor emeritus Texas Woman's University, passed away peacefully on December 31, 2025. She will be remembered for her strong faith and dedication to the Roman Catholic Church, for living her life intentionally, and for finding value and meaning in every moment and person with whom she met.

Francie was born to William and Mary Lu Hughes on February 28, 1958, in Charlottesville Virginia.

She is survived by her son David; her husband Doug; her sisters (Kathy and Rosie); and her brothers (Tommy, Billy, and Eddie).

While she was among us, Francie found joy in her family and friends, her love of quilting, and helping others. Her love of quilting helped inspire the formation of the St. Rita's Quilt Guild at St. Mary's, Our Lady of Lourdes, Catholic Church. The guild crafted quilts which were blessed by the church and given to the sick and elderly. In addition, she donated many of her quilts to charity auctions, which helped raise thousands of dollars.

Her desire to help others led Francie to a career as an occupational therapist. Dr. Baxter was a

dedicated leader in all aspects of occupational therapy, including clinical practice, service to local, state and national OT organizations, and research as a neuroscientist, educator, author, and mentor. Her legacy as an OT lives on through the students and colleagues she inspired.

Francie's self-confidence and adventurous spirit resulted in large part from growing up in a supportive family of outdoor enthusiasts. Francie was an accomplished downhill skier and competitive swimmer. She enjoyed water sports such as scuba diving, kayaking, and sailing. She was an airplane pilot and recently began training as a power-boat captain. She also loved to travel, especially to places of faith such as Vatican City, Knock Shrine, Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, Shrine of Fatima, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and many other important sites of the Catholic faith.

Francie was a loving, generous, forgiving, and joyful individual, who lived her life with purpose and kindness. Although her passing brings sorrow to many, she is now resting in the promise of Christ, who overcame death and welcomes her into eternal life.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Mary's Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church St. Rita's Quilt Guild or St. Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes Religious Education Department.

# Previous Events

## Rosary

JAN 30. 10:30 AM (CT)

St. Mary Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church  
500 W Old San Antonio Rd  
Caldwell, TX 77836-1162  
(979) 567-3667

## Funeral Mass

JAN 30. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St. Mary Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church  
500 W Old San Antonio Rd  
Caldwell, TX 77836-1162  
(979) 567-3667

## Inurnment of Cremated Remains

JAN 30. 12:00 PM.

St. Mary Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Cemetery  
Caldwell, TX

# Tribute Wall

IF

“*Francie was my PhD mentor and I thanked God everyday that she was. She was so supportive and truly committed to my success. I am proud to have known her and worked with her on the Sock Test. She was a beautiful soul whose memory will continue to guide me.*  
*Sincerely,*  
*Ingrid Franc*

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**Ingrid Franc** - March 05 at 12:08 PM

“ I am Francie's older brother by 14 months. Francie was a buddy to me. From our earliest times that I can remember clearly (Bountiful, Utah), she was always part of the pack of friends that we shared. It is arguably because she was 14 months younger than me (almost my age), but more likely because she liked the same kids and same things as I did. Where two or more of “my gang” were around, Francie and “her gang” were close by.

As we grew a little older, and skiing was in the soul of the Hughes Family, Francie was always working on her skills to be part of the group. You have to know this: When we lived in Upstate New York, Mom and Dad had friends that also liked to ski. One family had four children; the other family had 12 children. We had five for most of that time and then we had six kids in our family. Every Thanksgiving, the families got together. If it snowed (upstate NY - duh), we would happily predict that we would definitely all be skiing before Christmas. And then the question came from the parents: “Do you want to stay home and have presents or should we spend the money on a ski trip?” The answer was usually unanimous from 21 kids and 6 adults as a resounding YES! And adventures ensued. Going out on a lake that was completely frozen, skiing at one of the bigger mountains in NY State, and sharing large pots of spaghetti among all 3 families, snowball fights, exploring the “big lodge, and generally doing what a pack of kids do when left to be partially feral. And with at least 6 of the gang within 2 years of Francie’s age, she was smack in the middle of all the fun. Her pack, my pack, our pack. All of us Hugheses had the same link of kids in our age group so we were one large family. And it did not get better than that.

If I remember correctly, she, being an expert swimmer, racer, water ballet athlete, became scuba qualified along with my Dad when she was a freshman. In this case I took my lead from her and became scuba qualified shortly after. This was just before we moved to California, where she dove with our father a lot. way more than I did. But when we were all in the water, we were buddies. Always looking out for each other.

*Now, in California, life changed. Water was bigger, mountains were bigger, the beach was bigger, and our adventures got bigger.*

*I had been shadowing my Dad, who was on Ski Patrol since grade school in Rochester, NY. When we got to California, Dad found Snow Summit. As soon as I was old enough, I joined the Junior Ski Patrol. A year later Francie joined as a Junior Ski Patrol. As teenagers, we often drove up to Snow Summit together, who Dad and Mom had a different schedule. It was on these trips that Francie and I shared a lot and she gave me great council when I had problems that bugged me. This is when she was my closest buddy and friend.*

*Then even though I went off to West Point, and into the Army, and subsequently off to parts of the world, that bond with my buddy and friend (and loving sister), did not fade.*

*I could go on and on about her deep devotion to our Lord, her leadership among us children regarding the Church and her travels to special places such as Lourdes and the Passion Play in Oberammergau with Mom, but those stories are told in Heaven. My story is for the time she was with us and me and my gang.*

*She has a new crew now. One rejoicing and singing Praises to our God. I hope to join her someday. But in the meantime I want this life to be a reflection and honor of who she was and always will be for us left behind.*

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**Tom Hughes** - February 08 at 12:36 PM

WN

“ *Francie and I worked together for a number of years through our Quilts, Inc. connection. We had lots of laughs and adventures with the quilts.* ”



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**Winnie Ngan** - February 03 at 03:21 PM

SP

“ *Shannon Coker, OT, PhD purchased the Gracious Lavender Basket for the family of Mary Frances Baxter.* ”



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**Shannon Coker, OT, PhD** - January 30 at 04:47 PM

SP

“ *Shannon Coker, OT, PhD planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Frances Baxter.* ”

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**Shannon Coker, OT, PhD** - January 30 at 04:47 PM

JS

“ I will truly miss my friend Francie. We enjoyed being roommates and guest speakers together at TOTA. We traveled the world together, going to Australia, diving the Great Barrier Reef, spending time at AOTA conferences and traveling to her family home in Connecticut. She introduced me to kayaking and seeing the waterways of TX. We enjoyed long, intense conversations about the world that we live in on those road trips to conferences. I have always appreciated her knowledge and experiences of life. She even helped me with a small quilt sample. Her deep faith guided her spirit. Your wings are soaring high. Thanks for your friendship. Love to Doug and her family.

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**Judy Skarbek** - January 30 at 09:19 AM



“ Sweet Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Frances Baxter.



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January 29 at 12:52 PM

IF

“ Dr. Baxter was the kindest, most supportive PhD dissertation mentor anyone could ask for. She had no ego and wanted only to see me succeed. Rest in peace Francie ❤️

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**Ingrid Franc** - January 28 at 10:17 PM

ST

“ School of Occupational Therapy, TWU purchased the Sweet Solace Spray for the family of Mary Frances Baxter.



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**School of Occupational Therapy, TWU** - January 28 at 05:04 PM

JY

“ I am so sorry for your loss. I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Baxter in 2022 when I began my PhD in the TWU program, and we connected right away. She became my mentor from the very beginning, and even after her retirement, she chose to continue serving on my research team to see me through to the end of this journey. That commitment meant more to me than I can fully express.

*I respected her greatly, not only for her expertise, but for who she was as a person. Her guidance shaped my work and my confidence in ways that will stay with me always.*

*She touched many lives and will be greatly missed. I feel grateful to have known her and learned from her.*



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**Jennifer Yates** - January 28 at 04:41 PM

ED

“ I was Francie's first PhD student and I couldn't have picked a better mentor. She challenged and taught me as a candidate, collaborated with me as a colleague, prayed for me as a friend. I could always count on laughing about life and the human condition when we spoke. Francie--I will miss your smiling face and dry humor!



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**Elaina DaLomba** - January 28 at 01:38 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Frances Baxter.



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January 28 at 12:17 PM

OF

“ Orley Templeton & Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Frances Baxter.

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**Orley Templeton & Family** - January 28 at 12:17 PM

LB

“*Francie was an exceptional occupational therapist, educator, mentor, and colleague whose impact has shaped my professional journey. As my undergraduate professor, she ignited in me a love for the profession through her clarity, compassion, and determination to challenge the potential of every student. Later, as my doctoral capstone mentor, Francie offered the kind of guidance that transformed my scholarly journey, encouraging me to think boldly and serve with purpose as a pediatric occupational therapist and professor.*

*Today, I am grateful to have stood beside her as a colleague at Texas Woman’s University, where her wisdom, dedication, and boldness enriched our academic community. Francie embodied the very best of occupational therapy: a commitment to meaningful participation, a heart for service, and a steady presence that inspired excellence in all who had the privilege of working with her. Her influence spans generations of practitioners, and her legacy continues to grow through the lives she has touched. I will miss you Francie, rest well. - Linda Barnett*



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**Linda Barnett** - January 28 at 11:23 AM



“ I met Dr. Baxter at the 2017 AOTA Conference Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia, PA. She and I and several other answered the call to dress as one of the founders of AOTA. I was Ora Ruggles and I believe she was Eleanor Clark Slagle. Here we are wandering about the conference facility. We had a lot of fun. I remember her warmth and sense of humor. She will be missed.



Lisa Mahaffey - January 27 at 08:13 PM

KE

“ Kelli purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mary Frances Baxter.



Kelli - January 27 at 05:41 PM



“ Forever Our Angel Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Frances Baxter.



January 27 at 03:57 PM

KP

“ To me, Francie was so much more than a colleague or collaborator; she was the steady hand that guided my career and the friend who saw my potential long before I recognized it myself. We met in Ireland ten years ago, bonding instantly over our shared passion for advancing occupational therapy in cancer care, and at the time, I didn't realize I had also found one of the most impactful mentors of my life. Throughout our decade of friendship, she had a rare gift for guiding me through professional crossroads with calm insight, never imposing her own opinion but always empowering me to find my own way. I will forever miss her unwavering support and encouragement, her challenging spirit, her brilliant insight, our brainstorming meetings, and her calm, guiding presence, which she brought to every space. Her impact on my life and our profession is immeasurable—I am forever grateful for her commitment to me as a mentor and friend and the profound ways in which my world has been changed by her light.

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**Katie Polo** - January 26 at 07:00 PM

AM

“ Francie was a dear friend and research collaborator of mine. I enjoyed working closely with her these last few years and getting to know her. She was a bright spirit with lots of energy and humor. I will miss her dearly. She was a great person. Rest in peace Francie.

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**Asfia Mohammed** - January 26 at 01:02 PM

CP

“ As I write this from the deck of a ship I'm a bit sad I can't be there for your final goodbye. But the irony is not lost, as so many memories revolve around water-- fried clams at Blackpoint, kayaking, grilled oysters in Kemah and Katrina relief. Then of course Irish dancing, sessions at the Duck, quilting and quilting retreats. So many laughs and a few tears. And the surprise when realizing that you didn't just work in rehab but you were indeed going to be my professor at TWU. Francie, you have touched so many lives in so many blessed ways. The moment I read of your passing I happened to look up and see a flock of geese flying in perfect formation over the tranquil waters of Lake Texoma, as if to carry your spirit even higher. Farewell my friend.

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**Cheryl Patterson** - January 25 at 06:05 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray* was purchased for the family of Mary Frances Baxter.



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January 22 at 04:56 PM

CH

“ Dr. Baxter is central to my career as an occupational therapist and researcher. I will never forget the first day she sought me out individually and said, "we need more people like you in the profession." She fostered my out of the box thinking and encouraged me to aspire to higher levels of research and practice. While Dr. Baxter was not assigned to be my mentor in the program, I chose her to be my mentor because I saw some kinship in her. I like to think she chose me as an informal mentee for the same reasons. Even after graduating, I sought out her mentorship several times at various stages in my career. I was honored to work with her again as a recent PhD student. Now, I hope to follow in her footsteps as a new faculty member at TWU. I maintain the lessons she taught me as I approach my relationship with students, my research, and my teaching. Her legacy is, and will be, profound.

Christine Haines - January 22 at 09:34 AM

DB

Thank you for those kind words. Francie as very dedicated to her students and colleagues.

Doug Baxter - January 23 at 09:39 PM

DP

I believe that our goal in life is to become the person He created us to be, recognize the gifts we are given, and to use these gifts to build His kingdom. Francie was the epitome of all these things. I am a better person because Godwink Francie was in my journey to eternity ❤️🙏

Dorman Pullin - January 26 at 06:16 PM

KL

“ Dr Baxter was one of my favorite OT professors! Her knowledge and compassion were inspirational to our OT class- everyone I knew thought very highly of her. She will be missed by all that knew her and all that were impacted by her kindness.

Kelly Lynch - January 21 at 12:51 PM

DB

*Thank you for sharing.*

**Doug Baxter** - January 23 at 10:20 PM

GH

“ *I knew Francie from the Quilt Guild of Greater Houston . I wanted to do elevated gardening - and She suggested some barrels the family had - I am in a wheelchair- She would drop them off at my home on the way into work at Texas Women University . She was a wonderful person. I truly will miss her.*

**Georgeanna Hanagriff** - January 17 at 09:49 PM

DO

*Thank you for your memories. Francie was always trying to help.*

**Doug** - January 22 at 07:28 PM

BB

“ *Francie was a dear friend of mine for many years and we attended many Pro-Life and other church related & other events together. She was such a humble soul that, until I read her Obit , I was not aware of all of her accomplishments. I admired her beautiful quilts and other handmade 'works of art'. I remember for a period of time she was a beekeeper and a producer of Earthworms.I often wondered how she could keep up with all that she was involved with in the Caldwell area and travel back and forth to Houston to teach & attend meetings. Francie was a special blessing to me ,to everyone she met, and especially to the faith community at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. Beverly Barrow*

**Beverly Barrow** - January 15 at 01:49 PM

DO

*Thank you.*

**Doug** - January 22 at 07:30 PM

JJ

“ 9 files added to the tribute wall



**Judith Joseph** - January 15 at 11:36 AM

DO

*Wonderful pictures. Thank you*

**Doug** - January 22 at 07:29 PM