



## Valeria Alexander

April 12, 1929 - July 17, 2020

Valeria Alexander, 91, died peacefully at home on July 17, 2020 after a long illness. Valeria was born in Old Trafford, Manchester, England. She attended the University of Hull, where she earned a BA in French and Latin. Valeria taught English and studied cooking in France before earning an MA in Library Science. She was a reference librarian at the Manchester Reference Library in England and came to the United States to work at the Akron-Summit County Library, Main Branch. Valeria also worked as a museum interpreter at Hale Farm and Village for 12 years where she demonstrated hearth cooking. Val and Ben married in 1960 and built their family home in Peninsula, Ohio where they raised their children and enjoyed having many pets and farm animals over the years. Val was a talented artist, seamstress and knitter. She was an extraordinary cook and bread maker. Most of all, Val loved planning, cooking and enjoying special meals with her family and friends.

Valeria is preceded in death by her sister Gladys Hague, of Chorlton, England and lifelong friend, Brenda Decent, of Bury, England.

She is survived by her husband of almost 60 years, Benjamin; daughters Catherine (Richard) Opre of Chagrin Falls, Ohio and Anne (Michael Hurray) Alexander of Akron, Ohio; special nieces Amanda (Carter) Gilliams of Gaithersburg, Maryland and Elizabeth Watson of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio; family friends Jean Walker of Holcombe Brook, England; Mike Dickman and Todd Rydstrom of Oakland, California and many other loving friends and family.

Cremation has taken place. In response to Covid19 calling hours will be held outside at the family home by appointment on Friday, July 24, 2020. A private memorial service will be held. Special thanks to hospice nurses Norma, Jessica and Kellie and Dr. Esther Rehmus.

# Comments

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“ So sorry she has left us! Val was one of my favorite people. She was an ace cook, and loved to open her home to share a really looooong table of delicious delights with all kinds of people. My favorite, though, was the simple pasta dish she'd make me and Anne with just butter, salt and pepper. There had to be a secret ingredient, because I could never replicate the wonderful dish! One of my most treasured things is a hat that she wove me out of the combed out fur of some of the wolves I used to live and work with for my live animal nature programs. Val was one of the most witty, intelligent and well-read ladies I've ever had the pleasure of conversation and company with. I thank her for the precious memories of time spent at the cottage in the woods with her family. May she be wrapped in the warm woolen threads of her heaven and the firelight of the stars. Much love and sympathy for Ben, Anne, Catherine and their families.

**Teresa Hurray** - July 20 at 10:09 PM

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“ Annie, Ben and the whole family. I'm sorry for your loss. Val was a great cook and I remember her sharing some valuable cooking tips with me. A fond memory of the things she would cook, are the pigs in the blanket she would make for backyard picnics. She was super intelligent, and could always encapsulate the news of the day into one subtle, sarcastic, and humorous, sentence, which would make me smile. A wise and great woman.

Tom Hurray

**Thomas Hurray** - July 20 at 08:41 PM



“ Thank you, Tom. Do you remember the homemade onion rings she often served with those pigs in blankets?!

**Anne Alexander** - July 20 at 09:53 PM



“ I don't remember the onion rings, maybe they were all gone before I got to them :(

**Thomas** - July 23 at 03:45 PM

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“ 6 files added to the album Cooking with Friends



**Catherine Alexander** - July 20 at 12:19 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Emma Decent** - July 20 at 06:11 AM

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“ I have known Val all my life. She was my mother Brenda’s best friend. They met in their 20s at Manchester Central Reference Library where they trained together as librarians. They were ‘two clever girls’ as my mother’s landlady once remarked. My mum told me what good times she and Val had then, one of the happiest times in her life I believe. They were real soul-mate friends, sharing a love of literature, culture, education and political values of justice and equality. As well as training and working together, they went to see plays and films and taught themselves to cook all kinds of food including French, Italian and Indian. When Val took the step to emigrate to Ohio in the late 1950s, Mum told me she missed her a lot. A year or two later she followed in her footsteps and moved to a job in Toronto, Canada. From there the two women remained friends, marrying and having children. My earliest childhood holidays were spent with my family (Mum, Dad, sister Sarah and brother Tom) with Val and Ben in the beautiful home they made in Peninsula with Catherine and Anne. Anne and I are close in age and have been lifelong friends through our mothers. (As Anne likes to tell people, ‘We were in diapers together!’) My family returned to the UK in 1972 but such memories have stayed with me all my life. The Alexanders and Scobie Road remain very special to me.

I will always remember Val as funny, smart, generous and a fantastic cook. As well as being a good cook, she was a relaxed cook - it didn’t seem any trouble to her to rustle up a meal out of nowhere or bake bread from scratch. I remember how she took me under her wing when I visited the family on my own from the UK when I was 14. She drove Catherine, Anne and I all over the place, going on day trips and looting all the best thrift stores! We watched an episode of MASH every night - thrilling to me, in the UK we had few TV channels and MASH wasn’t on much. She followed the news like my Mum and always had something wise and wry to say the state of the world.

I have visited Ohio a few times since then - in my 20s, 30s and 40s - and Val and Ben and Anne have visited the UK. Since I lost my own parents they have become even more important to me - my other family - and Val - so like my own mother - like another Mum. Recently Anne and I have been having calls on WhatsApp. It meant a huge amount to me to see Val again that way. It touched me so much when she looked into the phone and said ‘Bye honey’ the last time we spoke.

I can’t imagine the loss Ben, Anne and Catherine are feeling right now. My heart is with you. Val was a special, generous, wise woman with a huge heart. I know she has been struggling for a few years and there is release in ending too. I imagine her and my parents chewing the fat now, eating food, having a glass of wine and cracking jokes, younger and more well than they’ve ever been! Go well Val. You are deeply loved and will always be missed.

Emma Decent

Daughter of Brenda Decent, Valeria’s best friend from Manchester



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Anne Alexander** - July 19 at 01:02 PM



“ Beautiful

**Emma Decent** - July 19 at 05:22 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Family Travel



**Catherine Alexander** - July 19 at 12:38 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Emma Decent** - July 19 at 07:41 AM



“ Brenda (nee Walker) Decent and Valeria

**Emma Decent** - July 19 at 05:23 PM

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Emma Decent - July 19 at 07:33 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Emma Decent - July 19 at 07:27 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Emma Decent - July 19 at 07:19 AM



“ Ben and Val's Wedding, November 1960

Catherine - July 19 at 10:08 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Emma Decent - July 19 at 07:15 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Emma Decent - July 19 at 07:14 AM