



Kathleen Cooper Vadala

JUN 7, 1950 - JUN 20, 2025



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Tribute Wall	Page 4
Media	Page 7



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With profound sadness and overflowing love, we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Dr. Kathleen Cooper Vadala, who left us peacefully on June 20th, 2025 at the age of 75.

Born on June 7th, 1950 in Elizabeth, New Jersey, Kathy was a woman of grace, quiet strength, and unwavering love. She devoted her life to her family, always putting others before herself, and found joy in the simple things—cooking a good meal, laughter around the dinner table, collaborating on music.

To know her was to feel loved. Her hands were rarely still—whether she was baking a delicious treat, playing the piano, or giving you a hug when you needed comfort. Her words were always meaningful, her smile could light up a room, and her embrace felt like home.

She was a devoted wife to her husband, Chris, a nurturing and proud mother to Nicole and Juliana, and a treasured grandmother to her brand new granddaughter, Ilaria.

She taught us patience, kindness, and the power of unconditional love. Her legacy lives on in the way we treat one another, in the family traditions she built, in the quiet strength we carry forward, and most importantly, in the celebration and sharing of music.

Though our hearts are broken, we are grateful for every moment we shared. We will miss her every day and honor her memory for the rest of our lives.

Her celebration of her life will be held privately, and at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made to the Christopher Vadala Memorial Scholarship Fund at The University of Maryland School of Music, in her memory.



Tribute Wall

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Keith Carey lit a candle in honor of Kathleen.

Love is one of the greatest things to behold, and along with both graciousness and inner and outer beauty, are forever in my mind as a perfect image of Kathy! I will greatly miss her. Heaven is truly blessed to have beautiful music with your Mother and Father now united in Heaven!! pray for you, Nicki and Juliana and your loved ones. I love you both very much! Your Uncle Keith (and Cindy) 970.209.5150 krustychops@gmail.com



October 8 at 10:46 AM



Maria Cristina lit a candle in honor of Kathleen.

Dr. V was such an inspiring woman. She believed in me when I wanted to give up on music, pushed me to become a better version of myself. I'm so grateful to have met her as a mentor. Thank you for all the wonderful memories Dr. V. You have taught us so many things in life that we will carry out because of you. Thank you for your warmth, kindness, and love. You treated us as if we were family, not just students. Thank you Dr. V. You will always be remembered in our hearts.



June 30 at 6:12 PM



Brooke Starghill shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Our first meeting Dr. Vadala was for my daughter's music scholarship tryout for Elizabeth Seton High School. I remember her being kind, encouraging, and excited to hear that Eva was taught music through the Kodaly concept. Eva was under Dr. Vadala for a year before Dr. V retired. Eva didn't continue in chorale after her second year because it didn't feel right without Dr. V. She was a truly beloved staff member of ESHS.



June 26 at 7:57 AM



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Dmarie Fekete posted:

Kathy and I met and became friends in a business meeting where she shared her hope to deepen and expand music and fine arts at Elizabeth Seton High School. Sometime later, she became my mentor as Seton's theater arts program stumbled through its first year. I enjoyed her humor, her dedication to her student musicians, and her expansive impact on musicians across the region. (When we taught together, I was surprised to realize I'd followed Chris playing with artists I'd enjoyed for years.) Their partnership was remarkable. When I first heard Chris passed, I was talking with rising music educators in a Music and Art Center. They were eager to share his brilliance and their concerns for Kathy. Clearly, there are uncounted musicians whose passion for performing continues because of Kathy and Chris. May all who cherish Kathy be held lightly in the warmth and joy you shared. May those who journey through grief feel love, echoing through infinity.

June 25 at 3:48 PM



Dmarie Fekete posted:

Kathleen became a friend during a conversation about her hopes for deepening the impact of music and fine arts at Elizabeth Seton High School. Some time later, she became my mentor when I spent a semester teaching, at the infancy of Seton's theater arts curriculum. Her sense of humor, dedication to excellence, and devotion to her student musicians was intense and inspiring. Our connection as teachers reminded me I'd followed Chris through his recorded work, long before we met. Their love and musical partnership touched the hearts of uncounted students, audiences, and performers. May all who cherish Kathy as their teacher be supported by the harmony, syncopation, and musical memories we share. May those who love your family be held lightly with warmth as you grieve. May their love infinitely echo in your hearts, ringing through time.

June 25 at 3:35 PM



Anne Carroll posted:

I am a teacher at Seton, and I was so impressed by how much of herself she poured into our music program! She was much loved by the students here, and by the other staff members here.

June 25 at 2:55 PM



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Afrasia Bermúdez-Crespín lit a candle in honor of Kathleen.

Our fearless leader!! I'm so sorry for your loss. Dr. V was an angel on earth who "saw" me and my potential as a person and musician, and was so kind to me and all of the students she encountered. My best memories with her are just the moments in class when we were all singing something silly for warm-up, or me begging her for yet another year to sing a Bruno Mars medley.



June 25 at 2:45 PM



Kailah Allmond posted:

I was a member of her choir at Elizabeth Seton High School. The first time I met Dr. V was when I auditioned to join Seton Chorale. She was so kind and loving. When I couldn't pick the right song to sing she just told me to sing and the song I chose, "His eye is on the sparrow", touched both her heart and mind and it still one of my favorite songs to this day. Dr. V was one of the kindest people I ever met and she made my high school experience and my love for music grow. She touched my life in ways I will never forget. I pray that her family is comforted during this time and I pray in Jesus name that when Dr. V is remembered by anyone that the love of God would flood their hearts. ♥

June 25 at 2:35 PM



Kathy Vass lit a candle in honor of Kathleen.

Nicole, I'm truly sorry about the loss of your mom. I was honored to take care of her during her last days, I'll never forget how kind and loving she is. Her smile always made my day! If you need anything please let me know. Sending hugs...



June 24 at 1:45 PM



Stephanie Smolka lit a candle in honor of Kathleen.

Nicole and Juliana, I am sorry to hear about your Mom. I have fond memories of her at St. Mark's as the music teacher and my colleague. She also was the organist for my Mom's funeral in 2000. She sweetly added in "Danny Boy" to the recessional hymn as that was one of my Mom's favorites!



June 23 at 8:33 PM



Brooke Starghill shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

June 26 at 7:57 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Kathleen by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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