



## Marilyn Ann Billimek

February 14, 2025

Marilyn Ann Billimek, retired Epidemiologist and Public Health nurse. At age 85 passed away February 14, 2015, at her home of 15 years in Sarasota.

Born in Cameron, south Texas, Marilyn graduated 1959 from Edinburg High School. She attended the Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, continuing her study of nursing in Corpus Christi at James R. Dougherty School of Nursing at Spohn Hospital then DelMar College, achieving her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing.

Anxious to travel Marilyn volunteered for the newly established Peace Corp. She spent two years in Malaysia providing prenatal and childcare and giving immunizations. For her next adventure she joined Project Hope as a public health nurse in the Peruvian Amazon, traveling by boat to administer to villagers. None of her colleagues there spoke English, so she became fluent in Spanish. Only later when talking to native Spanish speakers she was told she had learned 'jungle Spanish'.

When she returned to the US she studied tuberculosis in Colorado, becoming an authority leading to her fundraising and support of the Lung Association. She then pursued a Master's degree from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans, becoming an epidemiologist. For 28 years she was employed by Ventura Public Health Department using her keen detective skills and problem-solving ability to track the puzzling sources and spread of diseases.

Throughout her career Marilyn used her inquisitive nature questioning patients, their families, their environment to get at the root of communicable diseases. In the profile of Marilyn upon her retirement in 2003 the Ventura County Star reported one such example. Her insightful perception demonstrated the source of Valley Fever troubling Simi Valley after the 1994 earthquake. She explained on the Today Show the footage following the quake showed people taking pictures of the dust clouds, thus being exposed to the air-borne spores.

Marilyn led an active outdoors life of biking, hiking, back-packing, mountain climbing Mt. McKinley, for example, and traveling world-wide. Her calm, friendly demeanor and interest in people netted her friends wherever she went. Her special love was for birding and tennis, and a frequent attendee with her husband at the Bradenton Marauders baseball games.

She is predeceased by parents William Henry Billimek and Georgia Stavinoha, husband Dr. Michael Evan Sullivan, and brothers Henry W, Billimek, George A. Billimek, Reverend Thomas M. Billimek. She is survived by sisters Theresa C. Billimek Skloss and Margaret Billimek Butler.

A service will be held, Fri. 2/28/2025, 10:00am at St. Martha Catholic Church, 200 N. Orange Ave, Sarasota, 34236.

Donations may be made in her name to the American Lung Association.

# Previous Events

## Service

FEB **28**. 10:00 AM.

St. Martha Catholic Church  
200 N. Orange Ave  
Sarasota, FL

# Tribute Wall

BV

“ I worked with Marilyn with Ventura County. She was a wonderful professional, friendly and helped restore working relationships and respect between Public Health and Environmental Health Departments. I was honored to work with her.

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**Betty Villafana** - March 09, 2025 at 08:39 PM