



## Toni Lou Baggett

*August 21, 1959 - March 31, 2007*

Toni Lou Baggett, 47, of McKinney, Texas, was greeted on high by waving palms on March 31, 2007. In January 2007, Toni was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and was waging war against this disease at the time of her death. Toni is survived by the loves of her life, husband Billy Glenn Leonard, Jr., and their son Nate Baggett Leonard, a freshman at McKinney High School. Toni was born on August 21, 1959 in Wichita Falls, Texas to Jimmie Lou Osborn Baggett and Edwin David Baggett, both of whom preceded her in death. Toni was raised in Wichita Falls, and not surprisingly to anyone who heard her sing, her first words were in the form of a song. Toni graduated in 1976 from Rider High School in three years. While in high school and college, Toni served as the choir director of Wesley United Methodist Church with her able pianist, her father Edwin Baggett, at her side and her mother in the choir loft. After three years, Toni graduated with highest honors from Midwestern State University in 1979, where she was named "Outstanding Woman of the Year." After graduation, Toni was awarded a year-long Rotary scholarship to study law at the University of Sheffield in England. Her sponsors at Sheffield Vulcan Rotary Club received their "ambassador" from Texas with wide open arms, for which she was always grateful. In 1980, Toni met her "soul mate", Billy Leonard, during her first year at University of Texas School of Law in Austin. After they began dating in their second year in law school, Toni and Billy knew they had a genuine connection. Their classmates noticed this bond and elected the Toni and Billy team ballot as officers of the Student Bar Association. Between the end of finals and law school graduation, Toni and Billy cemented that bond in a wedding ceremony in Wichita Falls and honeymoon that continued to the time of Toni's death. The newlyweds settled in Dallas, where Billy joined the law firm of Strasburger & Price, and Toni was an attorney for the City of Dallas Legal Department. Toni advanced to Dallas Chief Prosecutor. She then became the prosecutor for the City of Plano. Subsequently, she was appointed Chief Municipal Court Judge by Plano City Council. Toni was known as a strict, no-nonsense judge and enjoyed working with the citizens, employees, elected officials, and peace officers in Plano and Collin County. One of her biggest accomplishments on the bench was organizing, implementing, and presiding over the first Teen Court in Plano. Toni was also recognized by the Texas Municipal Courts Association as "Judge of the Year." Nate, Toni's 9 ½ pound "sacka taters", completed the family trio over 15 years ago. Just prior to Nate's starting elementary school, Toni saw that her family needed her and traded the rigors of her legal career for those of home maker and volunteer—roles she relished. Toni was active in numerous McKinney educational activities—PTAs, fundraisers, and supporting enthusiastically the

McKinney High School Lions' football team. Friday Night Lights was also a reality in the Baggett-Leonard household. Toni, in her own words, compiled the following list of her favorite things: – Flat-topped headed boys, especially Nate – Bald-headed men, especially Billy – Fluffy dogs, especially Angus – My sweet family – My dear friends – Piano music, especially my dad's – Taylor Hicks (Soul Patrol) and Elvis Presley – Movie—It's a Wonderful Life – Sport—Football – Sports movie—Radio – Team—McKinney Lions – Colors—pink and lime green – God's guiding hand – Laughter through tears – Food—Italian – Antiques – TV Show—Friday Night Lights and American Idol (tie) – Magazine—People – Anything made with Swarovski crystals – The beasts (especially polar bears) and the children – Pedicures by Brooke – Vintage greeting cards – Cool fall days – Beautiful flowers – Butterflies – Cardinals – Offensive linemen (the unsung heroes) – Rainbows – Watching high school football games, especially when Nate is playing – Billy riding shotgun when Nate is driving – Angus riding shotgun when I am driving – Big hugs – Nate's voice – Nate's artwork Toni was born an "old soul" but possessed the sheer joy of a youth throughout her life. As a child, Toni was drawn to art and antiques and started working at an antique shop at the age of 10. In addition to possessing a keen ear for music and a discerning eye for antiques, Toni had a number of other tangible gifts. Her talents enabled her to succeed in diverse roles, including singer, orator, state champion twirler, chief prosecutor, chief judge—but the roles she treasured most were those of wife, mother, and friend. The sum of Toni included much more than book smarts and artistic talent. Toni was engaging to us and engaged us to celebrate even seemingly mundane activities. Toni loved life, loved people, knew how to have fun and made sure that we were enjoying ourselves as well. Toni's upbeat personality and warm smile were contagious. She had that rare, and all too unique, gift of making us feel better for simply having come into contact with her. The family will receive friends on Wednesday, April 4th at 7:00 p.m. at Turrentine-Jackson-Morrow Funeral Home, 2525 Central Expressway North, Allen, Texas. In accordance with Toni's wishes, an informal celebration of Toni's life will be held on Friday, April 6th at 2:00 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 315 N. Church St., McKinney, Texas. Toni requested that her friends wear comfortable or casual clothing, particularly bright outfits that reflect their happy times together. Hawaiian shirts, wild and crazy sunglasses, and any attire with pink, green, camo, and bling are especially welcome! Do you have a favorite story about Toni? If so, please bring it so we can include it in an album for Nate. Toni was determined to beat her ovarian cancer, but instead of focusing on herself, she was compelled to help others become more educated about ovarian cancer and the need for early detection. Toni planned to participate as a cancer survivor in McKinney Relay for Life (an American Cancer Society fundraiser) on April 27th. Several teams have formed in Toni's honor, affectionately nicknamed Toni's Troops. In lieu of flowers, please consider supporting two causes that Toni felt passionately about—education and early cancer detection. You can donate online to scholarships for higher education at McKinney Education Foundation—Toni Baggett by visiting [www.ToniBeatsCancer.com](http://www.ToniBeatsCancer.com) or by mail to McKinney Education Foundation—Toni Baggett, 510 Heard Street, McKinney, Texas 75069. Donations to McKinney Relay for Life—American Cancer Society, can be made at [www.ToniBeatsCancer.com](http://www.ToniBeatsCancer.com) or by mail to McKinney Relay for Life—American Cancer Society, in memory of Toni Baggett/Toni's Troops, 5100 Eldorado Parkway, Suite 102 PB #727, McKinney, Texas 75070. If Toni can help save the lives of others, Toni will have beat cancer! But, a friend's message shows us that Toni's struggle and the way she lived her life, have even broader meaning: "There is more than one way to save a life. Living but not enjoying life is little or no different than losing that life. Toni's words caught me at the right time to remind me of my priorities...to enjoy life and not work it away. She helped me decide to get my life back and to me, that's saving a life in and of itself. That's why I shared her website. I wanted her to save two more lives." Recently, Toni wrote these words to Nate: "I love butterflies, so when you see them, please think of me. Butterflies are like a new life, and it seems that this is the direction I am heading."

## Memorials

*As a founding member of the Rotary Club of Sheffield Vulcan I remember this glorious young lady joining in our Club activities in 1979-80. She enlightened our lives and I send our good wishes to all who remember her back home the USA. She was a gorgeous butterfly that touched our hearts. May she rest in*

*peace. Brian & Pat Midgley SHEFFIELD UK*

**BRIAN WILLIAM MIDGLEY, NOVEMBER 20, 2021**

*I'm saddened to learn of Toni's passing, but heartened by the tremendous woman it sounds like she became. I remember her in junior high and high school and the biggest enthusiastic smile.*

**CATHY HENNIG BACHMAN, JULY 22, 2015**

*AUNT THELMA, WILMA & ALTA CAME TO VISIT US (GERALD & BETTY) IN ATLANTA - AND THEY WERE ALL SO PROUD OF THEIR TALENTED, SMART & BEAUTIFUL GRANDCHILDREN. MY SYMPATHY IN YOUR GREAT LOSS. BETTY*

**BETTY W BELL, MAY 3, 2007**

*Dear Billy and Nate, We are so sorry for your loss! Toni was such a bright light and we enjoyed getting to know her while you were patients in our office. She always entertained us with her stories and kept us laughing until Nate's appointments were done! We were so sad when Nate got his braces off because we knew we would miss seeing you all. If there is anything we can do please call us at the office. You will be in our thoughts and prayers. Dr. Buchanan and Team*

**JENNIFER BUCHANAN AND TEAM, APRIL 23, 2007**

*Today is Saturday April 7, 2007. I just found out that Toni passed away. It's been almost 20 years since I've seen Toni and I was very saddened to hear the news of her passing. I know she is in a better place now. Toni was a special friend to me. We dated back in high school and sung in the choir and a group called Phase I. I was also good friends with her parents and sister Candi. Both the girls were so funny. You never knew what was going to happen next with them. It was one the most fun times in my life. Toni always had a smile on her face and always had a positive attitude about everything. I think she got her personality from her father Ed who was one of the nicest men I have ever known. I will be praying for Billy and Nate. I know this is a very tough time for you. The next time I see a butterfly I will think of Toni and the love and warmth she always gave to those she met.*

**ALAN RICHEY, APRIL 7, 2007**

*I still remember all of us cheering Toni as she walked down the hallway of the hospital for the 1st time after surgery. How much more excitement and jubilee did she experience from the Lord when she walked into heaven completing her "race" on earth! Toni is a woman worth celebrating. I have never met a more loving & kind person- and that was in the midst of a very difficult time for her-- physically, mentally & emotionally. I am deeply saddened by the loss of her life here on earth. Please know that I'm praying for you, Billy & Nate. Your entire family touched our hearts & lives on the 3rd floor. We are all praying for you & thinking of you.*

**JOANN MARLOW, APRIL 6, 2007**

*I was one of Toni's nurses at Medical Center of Plano. Toni was an incredible woman. I was blessed to have known her. My prayers are with you.*

**YVONNE ESKUE, APRIL 6, 2007**

*I was honored to meet Toni as the Plano Municipal Judge who swore in my class of Officer's in 1985. It was an honor to know her, be sworn in by her and to have her start my family on its way in Plano, Texas. I am certain there are many Officers lives she touched who have missed her since she left Plano for her other pursuits. I wish her family a heartfelt thanks and the warmest sympathies in their loss. It was a blessing to know Toni Baggett as not only a Judge but as the real person that she was. May God bless her and her family, always.*

**JAMES PHELAN, APRIL 6, 2007**

*Toni Lou... TRUE FRIEND. I had not seen Toni since college in the Falls. Toni made the sun shine brighter with that incredible, beautiful smile and contagious laugh, and oh that voice...I will always hear that voice. We are all better for having her in our lives. Nate and Billy, I have never personally met you but because I knew Toni, I know you, you three will ALWAYS be soulmates. I will carry you in my heart always for Toni, she would do the same for me.*

**ALYCE BAKER, APRIL 6, 2007**

*Billy & Nate, We will always be looking for the brightest butterfly in the sky and smile, and think of Toni. We are deeply sorry she had to leave so soon. Our Love, Ric, Judy, Andy & Amy*

**RIC, JUDY, ANDY & AMY ANDERSON, APRIL 6, 2007**

*God does not allow us to pick our time, only the way in which we live our lives. Toni lived her life with vitality, integrity, and love. In time, we will heal, but in her absence, we will always limp. Billy and Nate, know that a thousand prayers are with you in your time of loss.*

**E THOMAS BISHOP, APRIL 5, 2007**

*Bill, KayKay told me of your loss. I am so very sorry for you and Nate and pray God's peace will surround you and sustain as you celebrate Toni's coronation in Heaven. Karen Barton Howard, THS, Class of 1978*

**KAREN BARTON HOWARD, APRIL 5, 2007**

*I recently realized that it's not how much time you spend with someone, it's how deeply that person touched your heart for the few moments that you spent together! I thank God for my moments with Toni!*

**ANNE-MARIE JANUARY, APRIL 5, 2007**

*I went to Wesley Methodist Church with Toni and Candace in the 1960's in Wichita Falls and my older brother Larry was classmates with Candace. I am truly saddened to hear of Toni's life. She made great accomplishments in life and will be always fondly remembered. My prayers to her family. May God keep you in the palm of his hands.*

**PENNY SUE BANKS (MENA, AR.), APRIL 4, 2007**

*Billy and Nate, I am deeply saddened with the loss of your dear Toni, but what a blessing she was to you and everyone she touched . . . and what a blessing you were to her. You are in my thoughts and prayers.*

**KAREN GREN JOHNSON, APRIL 4, 2007**

*Toni lived a hopeful and happy life. May we all carry her happiness and hopefulness forward and spread it to all we meet.*

**MIKE ROGERS, APRIL 4, 2007**

*Billy, Nate, and Candy...joy, sunshine, laughter, love, and oh, so much glorius*

*music! That's what I will always remember when I think of Toni. We are all so blessed to have had her in our lives. May God's love surround you.*

**SUSAN CAMPBELL, APRIL 4, 2007**

*Billy, You are among the few who knew that I had the pleasure of working with Toni at the City of Dallas and of having you as my partner. When I appointed her as Chief Prosecutor, she soared! I simply stepped out of the way to watch in amazement at how she achieved so much with so little effort (energy, goodness yes, but not effort!). I never saw her enter a room without that beaming smile and her own special flair. Cathy and I thank you both for being such a meaningful part of my career. Dave and Cathy LaBrec Dave*

**DAVE & CATHY LABREC, APRIL 4, 2007**

*Nate, I did not have the pleasure of knowing your mom personally, but from reading other's memories of her, I can see that you are a wonderful reflection of her. The stories about her death have included so many assurances that she and your dad have equipped you with the tools you need to be resilient in this time of sorrow. May the Lord grant you and your family unimaginable peace until your memories once again bring more smiles than tears. Robin Draper Faubion M.S. Nurse*

**ROBIN DRAPER, APRIL 4, 2007**

*What can I say? As City Attorney I hired Toni to be the Chief Prosecutor of the Plano Municipal Court. When the judgeship came open, I urged Toni to seek it and enthusiastically recommended her to the city council. In my 28 years of municipal law, she was the best, always smiling, always fair and 100% ethical. God must have really needed her to take Toni from us at such a young age. The world is a better place because of Toni and we all are blessed to have known her. God bless her family.*

**GARY F. CHATHAM, APRIL 4, 2007**

*Our hearts pour out to you and hope that you can find comfort in knowing that others care about you and are praying for you. God Bless. Michael, Carolyn, Callen, Reid, and Stanton Garcia*

**CAROLYN GARCIA, APRIL 4, 2007**

*Toni and I were friends in junior high school and although we went to rival high schools, we remained good friends and saw each other often during our choir competitions. She was such a lovely young woman with a beautiful smile. Everytime we were together the feelings I felt for her were filled with happiness and optimism. Our fathers were good friends and that made our relationship even more special. Unfortunately I left for Europe in 1979 and never saw her again...we just lost contact, which I will forever regret. To her family, I send my deepest sympathy, my thoughts and my prayers. You were blessed to have her in your lives. Kathy Ralli Romberg Georgetown, Texas*

**KATHERINE J. RALLI, APRIL 4, 2007**

*Such a sweet person, such a warm loving soul, we are all stricken she is gone, but richer for having known her. I turned on the radio this morning and there was an old song from the 70's, I think it was James Taylor, with the refrain "but I always thought I'd see you one more time again" and now we never will. While you have your memorial service in Texas, I will be thinking of Toni Lou, wearing my brightest clothes and playing happy music, as she would have wanted. Love to you all. Julia*

**JULIA ROSE PIGNON, APRIL 4, 2007**

*Toni was such a beautiful person, and remain so in our hearts. She was always there to listen to your problems, especially with teenagers involved. I am so proud of her work with the teens in Collin County. She gave me peace when I struggled with my own son. I had the honor of meeting Nate. What a wonderful young man he is, I know his mother is very proud of him. Toni will be missed terribly, but I know she will have a special purpose in heaven.*

**JONI KAY SMITH, APRIL 4, 2007**

*I can only admire the love and faith of this family with Toni as its core. Love is eternal.*

**SHARON LISER, APRIL 3, 2007**

*Nate and Billy: I hope that you find some comfort in the wonderful memories you have of your mother and wife. Toni was always an example to me of a life being led fully. I am so sad for your loss, and I will miss her, too. My thoughts*

*are with you.*

**SHERRY TUCKER DAVID, APRIL 3, 2007**

*Nate, I thought you were precious the second I met you. I always love giving you a hug. When I met your MOM I knew where you got your awesome personality from!! You are an incredible young man & I know special things are destined to happen to you. Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your beloved MOTHER. Take care of your wonderful father. P.S. I love the show Friday Night Lights too!! McKinney Lions Offensive Line rules!!! All my love, Mary Bahr*

**MARY B. BAHR, APRIL 3, 2007**

*Tricia and I were sad to hear of Toni's passing. Our condolences to Billy, Nate and the entire family.*

**PATRICK F. MCGOWAN, APRIL 3, 2007**

*We mourn, but not as people who have no hope. We will miss you so much. Love, Bill, Sr. and Gayle Leonard*

**BILLY GLENN LEONARD, SR., APRIL 3, 2007**

*We are so sad and yet Toni's life was a celebration. You have been and are in our thoughts as you adjust to life without the earthly presence of Toni. You have touched our lives through Toni's illness*

**JOYCE PUTMAN LACKEY, APRIL 3, 2007**

*Plano Police Officer who enjoyed working with her while she was here at Plano. Toni always had a smile and a good word to say. She will be missed. I wish her family the best. Our hearts go out to all of you. God Bless.*

**LARRY W. FRAZIER #1165, APRIL 3, 2007**

**WE ARE SAD TO HEAR OF THE LOSS OF YOUR BELOVED WIFE AND MOTHER. ALWAYS A HUG ALWAYS A SMILE JUST A WONDERFUL PERSON. WE ALL WILL SEE HER AGAIN.**

**RICHARD/PATRICIA BAILEY, APRIL 3, 2007**

*I will never forget the first time I saw Toni Baggett and Billy Leonard. I was a first year law student at U.T. Law School, and they were both third years. They came bouncing (OK, well maybe Toni bounced and Billy strode alongside) into*

*one of our first year classes and enthusiastically encouraged us all to become involved in the Student Bar Association. I instantly liked both of them; their positive, upbeat personalities were infectious. What a perfect couple! As fortune would have it, I was privileged to continue my association with Billy and Toni three years later when I joined Strasburger & Price and practiced law with Billy for many years thereafter. On every occasion that I saw Toni over those years, she never changed from that same happy, positive person I met in the fall of 1982. Billy and Nate, I know this is a loss beyond words for both of you. May God comfort with His love and sustain you with all your happy memories of Toni.*

**KAREN WILLCUTTS, APRIL 2, 2007**

*While I didn't see Toni often enough in the 10 short years our boys were in school together, she was absolutely full of joy, upbeat about everything and a wonderful example to all...every time we met up. What a rare gift . My prayers are with Nate & Billy -*

**SARA EDWARDS, APRIL 2, 2007**

*So very sorry for your loss. A wonderful woman, a wonderful life. She'll be dearly missed.*

**SIMI DENSON, APRIL 2, 2007**

*Toni Baggett was one of the most beautiful people I have ever met. Both inside and out. I so enjoyed the days working for Plano Muni Court with Toni. She made working there so much fun. She was expecting Nate at the time and was absolutely glowing with love for a child who she knew would forever change her life. I enjoyed running in to Toni ever so often around McKinney for years later. She always brought a smile to my face. I regret not being able to say goodbye but know that as a child of God, we will have another chance to smile, and to laugh. Thank you for allowing me to call you friend, Toni. I will miss you.*

**KIM VITZ, APRIL 2, 2007**

*One of the happiest people I ever knew.*

**JUDY TAYLOR, APRIL 2, 2007**

*I just received Carol's e-mail and was stunned to hear the news. I am so very*

*sorry for your loss. I did not know Toni well, but know that she was a great lady. My heart goes out to you and Nate. Take one day at a time Billy. God will guide you through it and your friends and family will be a great help. You are in my thoughts and prayers.*

**COLLEEN COYNE MCGLINN, APRIL 2, 2007**

*Billy and Nate are in our prayers. Greg and Jill Willis*

**JILL WILLIS, APRIL 2, 2007**

*Billy - Thinking of you and your family during this very difficult time.*

**CHRIS MICHAEL CRONIN, APRIL 2, 2007**

*I so enjoyed Billy's stories about what a great time he, Nate, and especially Toni, had in Birmingham Alabama for the American Idol tour featuring their favorite, Taylor Hicks. What fun Toni had. I'm so glad they got to make that trip! May Nate and Billy's beautiful butterfly be with them all the days of their lives.*

**LANETTE FIDONE, APRIL 2, 2007**

*Billy and Nate, What a precious soul you have lost. My favorite memories are sitting with Toni practice after practice in Frisco watching our boys. She was so fun and always, always watching the apple of her eye. May God grant you the comfort only He can and may we look forward to the day when we meet Toni again face to face. I love you both and my heart aches for you. Sandy*

**SANDY SPENGLER, APRIL 2, 2007**

*It was an honor to know and work with you and you will forever be in my heart and memory.*

**CARY R WICKER, APRIL 2, 2007**

*Bill and Nate, I am so sorry for your loss. Toni was a loving wife and great mom. I know she touched your lives in ways that will impact you forever.*

**DAVID NIX, APRIL 2, 2007**

*Dena and I are so terribly sorry to hear of the loss of your beloved Toni. May her memory be eternal.*

**ANGELO & DENA PARKER, APRIL 2, 2007**

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