Barbara Krauss was a native of Youngstown. She attended Ursuline High School, and the YSU Dana School of Music.

Barbara earned her bachelor’s degree in Music Education from Dana in 1974, and began working full-time at WYSU-FM in 1975.

For many years she was the local host of Morning Edition from National Public Radio, and our morning mid-day classical music programming. Since 2000, she had lead WYSU’s annual group tours to places around the globe.

Her husband, Ron, is the broadcast engineer here at WYSU. Barbara and Ron have two sons, Erik and Philip.

Barbara Ann Krauss
January 2, 1951 - February 15, 2019

Barbara had been the welcoming voice of WYSU-FM for more than three decades. Thanks so much to the thousands of people who have shared their grief with us and expressed their sympathy and support for WYSU. We are proud to share some remembrances of our friend and colleague in this special newsletter.
L
ike many of you WYSU listeners, I knew Barbara only through her voice each morning. That was until I was lucky enough to get a job at the station. It was then that our friendship developed and has lasted for nearly 40 years. I am thankful to Barbara for teaching me the skills that I needed for doing the job, but for much more than that. She was the best of friends, accepting, loyal, honest and loving. And we had fun!

Barbara had the creativity, courage, and tenacity to finish any project she decided to tackle and did so with 100% enthusiasm. I'm so grateful to have had her presence in my life. And, like all of you, I will be missing her more than words can express.

- Ann Cliness

W
ay back when, back in the Don Elser and Bill Foster days, I heard this young announcer. I had a brand new stereo and her voice was one of the first things that I heard over my high powered new receiver. I have continued listening to Barbara all these years. I'm going to miss her terribly. I had a bunch of wonderful personalities on air, voices that WYSU listeners would recognize from the programs that originate in New York. No matter, we longed to get back to Ohio, to our farm here on weekends and over holidays to listen to WYSU. Barbara was a gem. WYSU is a gem. We still have our station but our kitchen isn't as homey somehow without Barbara's familiar voice. Missing you Barbara.

- Tom Engstrom

N
ear the end of a trip, our group had a walking tour of Rome followed by a free afternoon. Barb and I headed off with three major goals in mind: first, we went to Trevi Fountain to throw in our coins and make wishes. Why? Because that's what tourists do in Rome. Next, we went to sample the gelato at San Crispino, Rome's legendary gelateria.

Finally, we hiked to the Vatican with the intention to climb to the interior walkway at the top of the dome of St. Peter's Basilica. After waiting in line an hour, we took the lift, then climbed 320 steps, and emerged at the top. It was Sunday, and there was a mass in progress. The choral music and the recitations of the priest floated up to us making a rather ethereal sound. Barb was enthralled and transported briefly to a world of pure joy. Later she told me it was the best moment of the tour for her.

Barb was the perfect tour director—always smiling, always unflappable, always looking after her flock. She wanted every WYSU traveler to have a great time, and whenever a minor crisis occurred, as they always do on trips, she would jump right in and see that the problem was fixed. I used to call Barb “La Serenissima,” the most serene one, because of her warm personality and calming manner that put everyone at ease. I count myself extremely fortunate for having traveled with her on seven WYSU trips.

- Rick Shale

I
think it was obvious to most people that Barb and I had a blast during fund drives, which is such a weird thing to say, because fund drives, although necessary, have generally been something the audience and the staff just put up with, at best. Somehow, and it was never really planned, Barb and I were able to make our time together on the air mostly fun for everyone, but especially for ourselves. We have heard from so many people over the years who told us how much they enjoyed our easy-going banter and our willingness to make fun of ourselves and each other. It was good radio even if it was a fund drive. It was all genuine, wholly natural, and almost never staged; just us being us. We would latch on to anything that popped up in our ramblings, and we then rode it for all it was worth – limericks, haikus, word games, GUYM Cajoler. We would create themes for the day out of almost nothing and they would make for hours of entertaining programming. I think people appreciated that we were willing to go far, far afield in our conversations, rather than hammering away on the fund drive messages, and yet, or because of that, successful. I think what we were able to do during fund drives was unique and special. I never took it for granted. I always treasured it, and now, it sure makes for a wonderful memory of our 29-year work partnership.

- Gary Sexton

B
arbara Krauss was one of the first women friends I made when we moved to Youngstown in 1987, and ever since then, as we shared the occasional cup of coffee in the control room during her show, or a drink during Happy Hour on a Friday or Saturday, or an actual dinner, we would almost always talk about family and whatever joys, sorrows or crises we were experiencing. I will miss that close friendship so much. Some thoughts that come to my mind as I think about Barb - I'm an animal rescuer from way back, and Barbara and Ron and their sons Erik and Philip adopted one of the first foster dogs we ever had – it must have been 1997, and the boys named him Scott. I loved that name!

I could buy Barb scarves in any color – and I did! – because she wore them so well.

She regularly sent fresh baked bread home with Gary, and I sent her containers with samples of dishes I prepared that turned out pretty well – and she ALWAYS gushed over them.

She often sent me links to really interesting, intelligent articles - mostly on political topics, and that led to our love of Randy Rainbow! He is outrageous and incredibly talented, and we kept up with him and laughed and laughed at each new and fabulous video.

Barb was so steady, so loyal, so devoted – to her family, to her job, to her friends, to all her extra activities, and to learning and understanding the world better. I hope to live by her example, and in that way keep her beautiful spirit in my heart and life.

- Sue Sexton
Like tens of thousands of WYSU listeners over the past 40 years, I’ve considered Barbara Krauss a personal friend as she greeted me, chatted with me and entertained me nearly every morning wherever I was (at home, out walking, in the car). Some of my favorite experiences with Barb on the air were her and Gary’s interactions during fund drives. To be honest, I enjoyed listening to them during the drives even more than just tuning in the other 50 weeks of the year for the music. And once I entered the modern world with a smartphone and installed the WYSU app, I loved tuning in to Barb while I travelled around the country or around the world.

But my most personal and fondest recollections of Barb will be the three times my wife Chris and I traveled with her on fantastic journeys to Provence, Peru and Scandinavia. Getting to know Barb more personally was a real joy. I’m sure no one who listened to her on the radio would be surprised that she was an outgoing, friendly, helpful traveling companion. Organizing the several dozen travelers, working out schedules with our tour guides, corralling us before, during and after our daily journeys was hard work, but of course Barb never expressed any displeasure. The day we learned of Barb’s so unexpected death, my breakfast friends who had never met Barb face-to-face all were equally stunned and saddened at the loss of their daily friend. We all can celebrate, however, all the time we shared with her virtually and – for the more fortunate of us – personally.

- Elliot Legow

One of my favorite memories from my long-time friendship with Barb—there are so many—concern a special event she and Ann Cliness organized.

I think it grew out of an off-the-cuff comment during St. John’s choir rehearsal one winter evening in the mid-70s. We were rehearsing in preparation for Christmas services, and during a break, someone mentioned going caroling. And, as happens in many conversations, the general consensus was, “Sure. That would be fun.” And that was the extent of it. Or so many of us thought.

Some short time later, Barb and Ann announced plans to get WYSU listeners together at the WYSU office (perhaps still in the old Wick Motel?), practice a few traditional carols, set off up the Fifth Avenue area, and sing with great gusto until we were too cold to continue. We did all of that and then it was back to the studio for some cocoa and further merriment. We repeated the caroling the next year as well. The Robert Shaw Singers had nothing to worry about, but we had a great time together.

- John Manhollan

In today’s busy lives, Barbara’s plate was certainly brimming; nevertheless, she always made time for a chat with a friend. I feel desolate not having that voice in my life today. With abundant talents in music, cooking, traveling, and radio hosting, plus a keen knowledge and curiosity about current events, Barbara was the epitome of the person everyone would hold in high esteem and cherish as a friend. Barbara’s star is bright in the sky, but, everyday I wish she were still here, shining in our lives.

- Diana Runciman Moore

I was lucky enough to go on five trips that Barbara organized. She was amazing as she led these big groups of people. She would be everywhere at the same time, had everybody’s name and circumstances memorized by the second day, and had all trip details in her head. And yet, she was never frazzled, always attentive to each of us, and, of course, always smiling. Most of her friends knew that Barbara was an avid sour dough bread baker. When I expressed interest in the craft she came to my house and brought as a gift to me everything needed to bake bread: a fermentation basket, a bench scraper, rice flour (“it’s like Teflon”, she said), and especially the Holy Grail of bread baking, a part of her then more than 15 year old starter. It is more than 25 years old now, and it has never disappointed. So many—from neighbors to the health-bonanzas at church to regulars at The Bread Baker—have expressed joy at the gift of bread from Barb.

Barb’s idea of course. It will also surprise no one that the person who raved about my breads the most was Barb … that’s the kind of person she was.

Over the course of many years our friendship grew closer over baking, cooking, wine, books and especially travel. My wife Marilyn and I are avid travelers but always on our own, never on tours. No matter, each trip we took had to be reported in great detail to Barb who, we could tell, was always sizing up our trips as possible trips for the WYSU tours. She made us feel special. And, I always thought that Barb’s success is that she made everyone feel special, even over the airwaves. I’ll miss her deeply.

- Paul Kobulnicky
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The WYSU Newsletter, including the schedule for “Now’s the Time” can now be found at www.wysu.org.

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