



## **Nancy Jane Sawyer, M.D., Ph.D.**

December 31, 1939 – February 22, 2026

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Dr. Nancy Sawyer passed away peacefully on February 22, 2026, at St. Martin's in the Pines after a period of declining health. A native of Kentucky, she was born in Mayfield during a major snowstorm just minutes before midnight on New Year's Eve. She often joked that she never liked her birthday—or being the baby of the family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Robert (Ted) Sawyer and Susie Wilkins Sawyer; her brothers, Dr. Robert Sawyer, John W. Sawyer, and Teddy Lee Sawyer; her beloved sister, Martha Sawyer Duncan; her niece, Joanie Sawyer Thacker; her nephew, Bill Sawyer; her great-nephew, William Vanderwerp; her best friend, Claire B. Underwood; and her two favorite cats, Bee and Abby.

She is survived by five nieces and nephews—Jan Sawyer Mulloy (Leigh), Diane Sawyer Bologna (Bill), Jill Sawyer Vanderwerp (Mark), Denis Julian Duncan (Tammy), and Susan Duncan Compton (Joe)—as well as fourteen great-nieces and great-nephews. She adored each of them and cherished the many vacations and family gatherings they shared over the years.

Dr. Sawyer was valedictorian of Symsonia (KY) High School and graduated with distinction from Murray State University in just three years, earning a B.A. in Biology and Chemistry. She was a member of Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority. She received her M.S. in Pharmacology from the University of Tennessee School of Medicine in Memphis and later served as an instructor in Pharmacology at the University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy in Oxford. During this time, she became an expert duplicate bridge player.

She continued her academic career as an assistant professor of Pharmacology at Mercer University School of Pharmacy in Atlanta while pursuing doctoral studies at Emory University. After moving to Birmingham, she completed her Ph.D. and earned her medical degree at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine. She completed her postgraduate training in Internal Medicine at Carraway Medical Center.

Dr. Sawyer entered private practice in Leeds and Vincent, Alabama. She later joined the Mitral Valve Prolapse–Dysautonomia Center at Baptist Montclair Medical Center. In 2005, she opened her own practice focusing on dysautonomic autoimmune disorders and related illnesses, particularly those affecting women. She retired in 2015 after serving at Birmingham Health Care, where she especially valued caring for homeless patients and the women of the Lovelady Center.

She was honored to be named one of Birmingham’s Best Doctors in 2011 by B-Metro Magazine.

A memorial service will be held at Highlands United Methodist Church in Birmingham, AL on March 7, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., with the Rev. Emily Freeman Penfield officiating. The family will receive guests thirty minutes prior to the service. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Highlands United Methodist Church—Community Ministries, 1045 20th Street South, Birmingham, AL 35205, or to a charity of your choice.

Nancy and her family extend heartfelt thanks to the nurses and staff at St. Martin’s in the Pines and Compassus Hospice for their compassionate care; to her church friends; and to the many dear friends whose presence enriched her life.

Above all, Nancy was profoundly thankful for the thousands of patients who entrusted their care to her over four decades. They made her work not merely a profession but a true ministry—one she carried out with exceptional dedication and heart.