



*Dr. Virginia Lee
"Tinker" Scofield
May 14, 1948 - January 26, 2017*

Dr. Virginia Lee “Finker” Scofield died peacefully at Houston Hospice on January 26, 2017, after a fierce battle against cancer. She was one of those few we meet in our lives who was both dazzlingly brilliant and owned (and shared) the gift of love of virtually all of God’s creation. The loss of her light is crushing to those who knew her.

She was born on May 14, 1948 in Lincoln, Nebraska, to Betsy Lee (Aiken) Scofield of Brownsville, Texas, and Louis M. Scofield, Sr. of Lincoln. The two had met during WWII, and married after Lou’s return from the war. Betsy graduated from Texas A&I (now Texas A&M Kingsville) with a BA in English, and later, after her children were enrolled in school, she worked in libraries wherever the family moved. Lou served in the Army Air Corps in WWII (a decorated B-17 ball turret gunner in Europe 1944) and on his return and marriage to Betsy, the two of them moved to Lincoln where Lou attended and graduated from the University of Nebraska with a B.S. in Geology. His life’s work was Geology and Geophysics. After Virginia’s birth in Nebraska the three returned to Brownsville where Lou started out working various jobs, including as a Math instructor in college. In Brownsville their family grew to include her two younger brothers, Stephen and Louis. From Brownsville this little family then moved to West Texas to be part of the wild Permian Basin oil boom of the 1950’s.

It was in these early days that Virginia’s brilliance was noticed by her teachers, who made special efforts to keep her challenged as she swiftly advanced in learning. Lou and Betsy did so as well, each with their own sharp minds. Betsy led her into the world of books and reading, and Lou, with his own insights as a scientist, kindled in Virginia a relentless curiosity. Owing to her nature and her upbringing, Virginia also learned to show her natural kindness, honor, and respect to all others great and small. To top it off, she developed accomplished skills as an artist and developed her beautiful singing voice.

She attended the University of Texas at Austin and received her Ph.D. in 1978 in microbiology/immunology. Thereafter, she moved to California and did postdoctoral research into immune systems in association with colleagues at Stanford University including her preceptor Dr. Irving Weissman. From 1983 to 1991, in her own lab at the UCLA School of Medicine, Virginia continued her research into immune systems, cancer,

and the growing aids epidemic of the 1980's.

After teaching stints at Pomoma College and USC, she returned to the University of Texas in 2000 where she did research and teaching work from 2000 to 2010 with the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Science Park. In 2010, she agreed to join UT San Antonio and continue her research and teaching with the UT San Antonio Health Science Center (now UT Rio Grande Valley). She moved to the Edinburg/McAllen campus where she worked and taught until her death from the vicious disease she spent a lifetime studying and battling for the rest of us.

During her career she published over 40 papers as primary investigator, contributor, or editor. Some were published in the popular press like *Science* magazine and *Nature* magazine, and others in prestigious journals known more by other cancer warriors than by the rest of us. She travelled the world as an invitee to make presentations in places such as Japan, India, Italy, Hungary and England, as well as all over the U.S. and Canada. She was known for her energetic and focused style.

She continued to the very end to work on her research and to help with the new medical school being established at UTRGV. She did not want to leave us, or her colleagues. Throughout her career she was vocal about her love of her work, but more so about her love for her colleagues. They were each so special to her she honored them by speaking of them often. She dubbed one of these colleagues her "cancer coach", Dr. Wendy Innis, who was tireless and stalwart with support and love throughout the final illness.

Virginia's life-long nickname was "Tinker" after Disney's Tinker Bell, which essentially was her name among her immediate family and closest friends. She is survived by her Aunts Irma Aiken of Brownsville, Texas, Marilyn Scofield of Sequim, Washington, and Maggie Aiken of Memphis, Tennessee; by her second cousins Gerry Tegarden of Corpus Christi, Jack Tegarden of Brownsville, and Susan Bigelow of Sunnyvale California; by her brother, Louis Scofield of Beaumont; by her 9 cousins; and by her nephews and niece Chris, Nick and Emma,. She was preceded in death by her father, Louis M. Scofield, Sr., her mother Betsy Lee (Aiken) Scofield, and her brother Dr. Stephen Bruce Scofield, Associate Professor of Accounting and Business (Texas A&M Kingsville).



Memorial Service
Friday, February 10, 2017 2:00 p.m.
Trinity Episcopal Church
Pharr, Texas
Father Scott Pendrod



Please sign Dr. Scofield's guest book and share your memories at
www.broussards1889.com