



Danté Louisa DaWalt

September 23, 2025

Danté always referred to her age as “timeless.” Sadly, this timeless, intelligent beauty died at a young age, succumbing to the symptoms of brain injury with early-onset dementia. Danté described age as: “Age is relative to whatever it is compared to. Being timeless empowers you to be relevant and always young at heart.”

Danté loved to read, write, teach, and present. The great loss of these abilities over time was a torturous burden she is finally done enduring.

Danté achieved a high level of academia with an incredible amount of awards and special distinctions. This list is not finite:

Certified Medical Assistant and Phlebotomist specializing in newborns, pediatrics, and maternity cases.

She served in the Army and was assigned to a Military Intelligence Unit based in the former East Germany and then San Angelo, TX. She was a superbly talented Sharpshooter with M16-Rifles & Hand Grenades. She was honorably discharged from active duty when she became a Mom.

She earned a Bachelor's Degree of Science in Elementary Education from Southeast Missouri State and was inducted into the Kappa Delta Pi Honor

Society.

She also earned a Master's Degree in Educational Administration from Bradley University and was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. She accomplished this degree while being a working single Mom.

It was Danté's life mission to give people the power of education. "The gift of choices." 20+ years were proudly served teaching in public, private, and inner city schools from the primary level, to elementary, special education, high school, University, juvenile corrections, and adult corrections.

Her teaching talents were extensive and astonishing. This includes, but is not limited to: reading, language arts, religion, special needs science & biology, general math, pre-algebra, Physical science, science laboratory, Science Olympiad Coach, Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Education Development (GED), History and Philosophy of Education for the University of IL (not just in-person, but she also designed the online course).

The last 10+ years of her career were passionately dedicated to the Department of Corrections Education in Virginia. She was both an ABE and GED teacher, along with many other valuable duties. At the pinnacle of her career she served as Regional Principal at Haynesville Correctional Center where "Education and Reentry Empowers Success."

Danté had a fiery devotion to helping sentenced offenders get access to education in order to reduce recidivism rates. So many are successful post-incarceration because of her quest to prepare students for a new productive pathway in life.

Danté helped an unbelievable number of offenders obtain both basic education and GEDs to broaden their opportunities once released.

Additionally, she used the power of education to aid a huge amount of offenders in earning an Associate's Degree in Arts & Science via Rappahannock Community College in Warsaw, VA in partnership with Haynesville Correctional Center. Her achievements working with the college earned her a prestigious award from the Vera Institute of Justice.

She was a talented grant writer and communicator to get funding for these education programs. She notably worked with the great billionaire Doris Buffet, of the Sunshine Lady Foundation. At one point, Ms. Buffet was going to pull grant funding for the facility and would not speak with anyone regarding the issues surrounding her decision. Danté ended up being the only person Ms. Buffet would speak with. To no surprise, Danté secured the funding needed so students could continue working towards their goals.

Danté was able to transcend the roles of being a Teacher & Principal, and achieved her "holy grail" of being a social change agent. Her legacy will continue to live on via the extraordinary amount of lives, families and communities she touched.

Danté's last, most precious duty performed as a teacher, and Gran, was helping her granddaughter Elwyn learn to read and her granddaughter Ilyana and Isla learn letters, numbers, and shapes.

Danté was named after the most famous Italian poet, Danté Alighieri. She adored her Italian heritage and grew up in a large catholic, multi-generational Italian community. It was her dream to retire to a little Italian town with a vineyard.

Danté raised four daughters (all named after literary heroes) Arwyn, Morgan, Olivia, and Abigail. She did this while climbing the career ladder and also

relocating many times across the country as, at the time, a military wife. The only way to accomplish all this simultaneously is with a lot of love. Being a Mom, and Gran, was one of her most prized achievements. She spent many years lovingly welcoming her daughters and grandchildren into her home for safety and stability whenever needed. She frequently spoke proudly of all their accomplishments.

Danté loved to drink tea and read medical journals, listen to audiobooks, indulge in a wide genre of novels, visit museums, go antiquing, and dance to a good beat.

Traveling was special to Danté. Her 2 favorite trips were solo adventures to Switzerland and England. She had the opportunity to live in California, Missouri, Germany, Texas, New York, Connecticut, Tennessee, Hawaii, Illinois, Virginia, and Colorado.

Animals held a special place in Danté's heart. She raised many dogs, birds, bunnies and cats. Danté helped start a pet therapy program at Haynesville Correctional Center in Virginia, in which her beloved bulldog Princess Fiona Sassypants was one of the first trainees.

Danté spent the last 2 years of her life horseback riding at the incredible Hearts & Horses Therapeutic Riding Center, of Loveland, Colorado as part of their unique "Riding in the Moment" program dedicated to people with Alzheimer's, Dementia, and memory loss. Danté adored her horse Hope and the amazing volunteers and instructors. These were some of her happiest moments in the last few years of her life.

Danté spent the past 5 years of her life in Colorado, under the care of her youngest daughter Abigail. She was able to live out the highest quality life possible while enduring so many losses from dementia. She was very well

taken care of with the help of many amazing caregivers. She found comfort being called by her middle name, Louisa, during this difficult final season of her life. It was heartbreaking and confusing to lose her identity; everything she loved about herself.

In her forced early retirement in Colorado, she loved to be in nature at Rocky Mountain National Park, ride at Hearts & Horses, visit the Butterfly Pavilion, the Cat Cafe, and Benson's Sculpture Garden. She greatly enjoyed taking walks in the sunshine, watching movies with a cup of tea, helping Abigail to cook, bake and garden; often listening and dancing to music, and visiting the family of owls living outside her home.

Danté Louisa was beautifully complicated. A wonderful enigma. Intelligent and logical, but also magically whimsical. She was committed to doing the best she could with what she had. She was resilient through so many challenging circumstances.

Tiny but mighty, she leaves behind an impressive legacy. She is most certainly resting in elegance; wearing her best dress, pearls, and high heels. Her best accessory was, without a doubt, her smile.

Danté Louisa DaWalt was born in California, on Earth Day, April 22nd, 1961 and died in Colorado, on September 23rd, 2025... finally, and peacefully, she has returned "home." She was dearly loved by many, and is deeply missed.

She was preceded in death by both her parents, Phyllis Jean Morrow and Aldo Angelo Santoni. She is survived by her four daughters, Arwyn (Randy) Valerius, Morgan (Gage) Sarver, Olivia DaWalt, and Abigail (Landon) Adams. There are many surviving grandchildren; Gabe Valerius, Julianna Lane, Conner Lane, Torryn Sarver, Theodore Valerius, Elwyn Sarver, and Ilyana Sarver.

Please make a donation (or volunteer) in Mom's Honor to:
Hearts and Horses Therapeutic Riding Center
163 N Co Rd 29
Loveland, CO 80537
#9706634200
<https://heartsandhorses.org/donate/>

Dementia Together
4025 Automation Way, Ste F-2
Fort Collins, CO 80525
#9703055271
<https://dementiatogether.org/give/>

Somewhere over the rainbow way up high
There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby
Somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true
Someday I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far
Behind me
Where troubles melt like lemon drops
Away above the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me
Somewhere over the rainbow bluebirds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow
Why then, oh, why can't I?
If happy little bluebirds fly
Beyond the rainbow

Why, oh, why can't I?

Tribute Wall

CS

“ I had the opportunity of training Fiona Sassy pants; Ms Dewalt was the absolute Best!



Christopher Shivers - January 17 at 01:09 PM

ML

“ What a lovely tribute to your mom. We were friends in the army and shared happy times while living in Germany. We're sorry for your loss and are saddened as well. God bless you all.

MaryBeth and Leon Lipp

MaryBeth Lipp - October 09, 2025 at 12:51 PM

KK

“ Abigail, prayers for you and your family during this time. With love, Karen Kish (traveling buddy from manito)



Karen Kish - October 07, 2025 at 12:46 AM

RA

Arwyn, I'm sorry for the loss of your mom! Prayers to everyone and peace In the years to come!

Rachel - October 08, 2025 at 07:32 AM

AA

“ 21 files added to the album Portraits



Abigail Adams - October 03, 2025 at 10:04 PM