



Christine "Tina" C. Harbec

October 20, 1941 - October 9, 2024

Christine (Tina) Carol Harbec of Canton, age 82, passed away on Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at her home at Waltonwood Cherry Hill Memory Care. She has gone on to share a glass of wine (a nice red) with those who have gone before her, looking forward to tee time on a heavenly golf course or a fishing spot where the fish are always biting.

Born on October 20, 1941 in Detroit, Michigan to the late Mike and Stelle (nee Pasek) Zawerucha. She graduated from Caro High School with the class of 1958 and went on to Business School after being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. She married the former Thomas Harbec in June 1960 until his passing in October 2009. They lived for a time in Detroit, Michigan where she worked for JL Hudson's as a Kelly girl and General Electric. After moving to Unionville, MI, they adopted twins, Mark and Melissa. Tina spent several years working for Mutual Savings and Loan in Sebawaing, MI. She retired from the Caro Center in 2006 after over 25 years of service with the State of Michigan. She moved to Westland, Michigan in 2016 and finally to Canton, Michigan in 2023 when her health began to decline.

Tina perfected the art of baking cookies that were so good, that the Cookie Monster is in mourning. She believed in the power of butter and sugar to bring a person a little bit of joy. Her sheet pies were the stuff of legends, causing a rush to the dessert table at any event. Blueberry and strawberry rhubarb were standouts.

A staunch defender of the underdog, Tina was always ready to champion

anyone in need, even to the very end of her life, often assisting in feeding her table mate, who was unable to feed herself. No one could ever be hungry in her vicinity. She taught us that if you see an injustice, you should speak up, and work towards changing the system and if all else fails, a middle finger could be used as a last resort. She taught us that love is love and who you love doesn't matter.

When she wasn't baking, you could find her in her flower gardens, growing beautiful hydrangeas, roses, clematis, and hibiscus. Her indoor plants were also favorites and prolific. If anyone needs a spider plant, please let us know. Her true paradise, however, was Oak Beach, MI, where she found joy in simple pleasures like morning walks with her dogs on the beach, fishing with Tom, or just basking in the beauty of the shore. She loved catching walleye and there is still a question as to how her favorite lure became 'lost in the lake'. She spent over twenty years going to Oak Beach County Park every summer enjoying the comradery of all the residents including meeting up in the winter to make waiting for spring easier.

She also loved to travel, especially visiting Mark as he moved throughout the country. From New York, to Chicago to Los Angeles finding wonderful markets, restaurants, and shows made each trip special. For anyone who sat next to her on the plane or train, we hope you enjoyed her chats.

Tina's toughness was legendary—67 years of type 1 diabetes never slowed her down. In fact, it may have just given her more reason to enjoy every bite of life (and those cookies). We'll miss her humor, her loving heart, and most importantly, her unfailing ability to find the best in every moment, whether that was with a fishing pole, a golf club, or surrounded by her beloved dogs in her gardens.

Tina is survived by her children, Mark Harbec (Paul Streckmann) of Fort Worth, Texas, and Melissa (Jay) Laney of Canton, Michigan, who promise to keep her spirit alive by continuing her baking; grandchildren, Tristian and Jillian Laney; siblings Pat (Grant) Gettel, Marlene Merchant, and Tony Ventline; sisters-in-law, Lori Zaverucha and Pat Hunter; uncle, Edwin Pasek;

many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. Tina was preceded in death by her parents, Mike & Stella Zaverucha; husband, Tom; father-in-law and mother-in-law Joseph & Martha Harbec; brother, Tom Zaverucha; sisters-in-law Donna Zaverucha and Judi Knechtel; brothers-in-law Robert Hunter, Jim Knechtel, and Bill Merchant; nephew Nick Gettel.

Join us for a celebration of her life on Friday, October 18, 2024, and visit with the family beginning at 9:00 AM with a memorial service starting at 10:30 AM at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 46401 Ann Arbor Road West (Between Sheldon and Beck), Plymouth, MI, the Reverend Christine Fentress-Gannon presiding. A luncheon will be served at Antonio's of Canton, 2220 N. Canton Center Rd, Canton, MI immediately following. Bring your best stories, and be ready to share a laugh or two, just as she would have wanted. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Thumb Animal Shelter at www.thumbanimalshelter.com or another organization, preferably one that helps underdogs close to your heart.

In accordance with Tina's wishes, cremation has taken place.

Rest in peace, Mom. We'll keep the cookies coming and the stories alive.

Recipes available upon request.

To share a memory or a message with the family, please use the Share a Memory tab on this webpage.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

OCT 18. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenfh.com

Memorial Service

OCT 18. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenfh.com

Tribute Wall



“ Vermeulen Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Christine "Tina" C. Harbec



Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home - October 18, 2024 at 10:43 AM

MZ

“ I feel like I know "mom" vicariously through Melissa. After reading through these comments and memories it is clear that she passed her love of life and fun to her family in many ways. To all, I am sorry for your loss. Mary Z.

Mary Zyczynski - October 14, 2024 at 08:51 AM

AH

“ Aunt Tina always made me laugh with her stories. Her laughter was contagious. She kicked diabetes in the butt! Never letting it stop her and she never used it as an excuse not to live. She furiously loved her family , so proud of the you guys . So many stories about her beloved dogs. As a kid I remember Oliver the Saint Bernard, and all his slobber and sweetness. I will miss her . Ann hepfer



ann hepfer - October 12, 2024 at 07:19 AM