



Colleen Marie McKerracher

January 23, 1950 - August 6, 2022

Colleen McKerracher of Westland, Michigan, died at Livonia's Angela Hospice on August 6, 2022 after a courageous battle with brain cancer. She was 72. Born on January 23, 1950, to the late John and Doris Hanley, Colleen was the third of the Hanley family's ten children. She attended St. Scholastica grade school in Detroit and graduated from Redford High School in 1968. Colleen's lifelong mantra was: "You gotta keep moving." She did just that from the time of her teenage years when she competed in artistic roller skating at the Dearborn Rollerdrome; to adulthood on the long hikes she took with her husband, Howard, through over 40 parks of the of the U.S. National Park System. It was at the roller rink that she first met Howard, a competitive speed skater, at age 14. More than a decade later they married, in 1978, but only after her sense of independence took her to Long Beach, California, where she resided for a few years, and his took him traveling through Europe. Married for 43 years, they attended the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid before starting a family. Colleen was the mother of two children, Amy and Jeff, and the family traveled extensively throughout the country for Amy's dance competitions, as well as to Canada for Jeff's hockey tournaments. Throughout it all, Colleen worked a variety of part-time jobs at Daly's, Toys R Us, a video store, and at home preparing auto parts for a chroming-like process. As her children prepared to leave home for college, she began to work full time on engine assembly at Detroit Diesel until her retirement in 2010. She was a proud member of the UAW. It was around the time of her retirement that

Colleen and Howard purchased a fifth wheel that they trailered to national parks, state parks, and warm weather destinations with close friends and relatives. Also, there were vacations to Alaska, the Galapagos Islands, Machu Picchu and many other destinations over the years. Moreover, they hiked together to the bottom of the Grand Canyon where they spent several days at the Phantom Ranch. In 2012 they began spending winters at Siesta Bay RV Resort in Fort Myers, Florida, where Colleen "kept moving" every day with attendance at daily exercise-to-music classes, as well as frequent walks through Fort Myers area parks and along the beach on the Gulf of Mexico. In her spare time Colleen made over 50 scrapbooks featuring cherished photos and colorful designs, many of which she presented as gifts to family members and friends on special occasion. She also collected and assembled an estimated 170 boxes of jigsaw puzzles. However, the thing that gave her the most joy was interacting with her grandchildren, Davis and Leah. Again, seemingly always on the move, the image persists of Colleen getting down on the floor to play football with Davis or running through the grass to play with Leah. It is difficult to adequately convey the authentic "who" of an individual, but perhaps the following comes close for Colleen McKerracher: She was a humble, genuine and selfless person. Someone who was always there, always in the corner of dispirited, ailing or grieving friends and family. And she could light up a room by simply walking through the door with her radiant smile and saying, "Hi." She will be forever missed. Colleen is survived by her loving husband, Howard; daughter Amy (Eric) Bower; son Jeff (Kyla) McKerracher; grandchildren Davis and Leah Bower; sister Marty Stafford; brother Mike (Diane) Hanley; sister Shauna Palmer; sister Pat (Jim) Dunn; and brothers Tim, Kevin, Brian (Tonya) and Terry Hanley. She is also survived by dozens of nieces, nephews, and close friends. She was predeceased in death by her sister Kerry Hild.

Visitation Thursday, August 11th 2-8 PM at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 980 N. Newburgh Road (between Ford Road and Cherry Hill) Westland. Funeral Service Friday, August 12th 11 AM at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to Angela Hospice, 14100 Newburgh Road, Livonia, MI 48154. To share a memory, please use the Share a Memory tab on this web page.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **11**. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Westland
980 North Newburgh Road
Westland, MI 48185
(734) 326-1300
westland@vermeulenfh.com

Funeral Service

AUG **12**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Westland
980 North Newburgh Road
Westland, MI 48185
(734) 326-1300
westland@vermeulenfh.com

Tribute Wall



“ *Colleen Marie McKerracher*

December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM



“ *Deepest sympathy Howard to you and your family. Your wife sounds amazing. I am so grateful that you were able to have so many wonderful experiences and memories with her. I sincerely hope you will find comfort from them in the days and months ahead. We never forget those we grew up with so long ago. Think of you and our days at Leslie so often.*

Rebecca Lowry Sedgwick - August 12, 2022 at 07:15 PM



“ *I worked with Colleen and Howard at Detroit Diesel where we became close, we all would play cards together at breaks and always had fun. Colleen was a very hard worker and took her job very seriously, she always had a smile. Latter after Colleen and Howard retired we would meet together with our other friend Larry and have Lunch I looked forward to them so much, we would catch up on what was going on in our lives and laugh and hug it was wonderful. I was waiting for another get together when I received the news of Colleen passing I'm so sad I will miss her so much she truly touched my life, Colleen and Howard also attended my and my Husband Kens wedding it was Wonderful. I miss you my Dear Friend.*

Carol Cotton - August 11, 2022 at 10:33 AM

JL

“ Aunt Colleen will always be in my heart. She was the party organizer, the picture taker, (and she would then mail you the pictures she took) the every birthday and anniversary card sender, the warm smile that always made me feel welcomed and loved. She attended my wedding shower even though she was covered in poison ivy, (where most people would have stayed home, and understandably so) but she didn't miss it. So grateful to have known her and so sorry for everyone that lost her in their daily lives. She's not here anymore, but never forgotten.

Jess Lesz - August 11, 2022 at 10:10 AM

KW

“ Karen Woodford purchased the Sweet Tenderness for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



Karen Woodford - August 11, 2022 at 01:12 AM

AW

“ Amy I'm so sorry to hear about your mom. Sending thoughts and prayers your way. My favorite memory was going to your house around Christmas, I loved your moms collection of Santa bears and all her decorations. Take care. Love Amanda (Parks) Wright



amanda wright - August 10, 2022 at 10:36 PM

SC

“ Shawn and David Chandler purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



Shawn and David Chandler - August 10, 2022 at 08:00 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



August 10, 2022 at 05:56 PM

SF

“ Sheila, Sarah and Our Families purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



Sheila, Sarah and Our Families - August 10, 2022 at 02:48 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



August 10, 2022 at 05:34 AM

EC

“ Eric's Kalamazoo Soccer Crew purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



Eric's Kalamazoo Soccer Crew - August 09, 2022 at 09:08 PM

LG

“ Love, Greg and Gerri purchased the Written in the Stars for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



Love, Greg and Gerri - August 09, 2022 at 08:44 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



August 09, 2022 at 08:24 PM

JH

“ Colleen lived more life than most of us will ever see! What a go getter. I have great memories with her and the family and am honored to have known her. You will be missed Colleen. Love and prayers to the entire Hanley Klan.

Love

Jeanne Hanley

Jeanne Hanley - August 09, 2022 at 06:48 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.*



August 09, 2022 at 06:21 PM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.*



August 09, 2022 at 02:11 PM



“ *Dear Colleen,*

You will be greatly missed; your smile, laughter and generosity. I never understood why you liked to do jigsaw puzzles until the pandemic hit and I borrowed a few from you. Now I too am hooked. Howard, Amy and Jeff you have my deepest sympathies. likewise, to Colleen's siblings and grandchildren and nieces and nephews. Rest in peace my friend.

Holly

Holly Zupanick - August 09, 2022 at 11:16 AM

LL

What a beautiful, special friend. Our paths crossed many years ago in Fort Myers, Florida. Colleen's dedication working out daily at my class, even during her struggle with her illness, was amazing. Her strength, enthusiasm, courage, and determination was like no other. I will miss her dearly, always with loving thoughts of this wonderful lady. To Howie and the family, I send my deepest sympathy.

Lynn LeBlanc - August 10, 2022 at 04:44 PM



“ Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.



August 09, 2022 at 11:02 AM

AB

“ As I have walked through life's path, my mom's love and support have always been with me along the way. I will miss the strength she gave me and the comfort of her hugs. I know she will always be with me in my heart.

And my mom was the best grandma my kids could have asked for. She loved Davis and Leah with her whole heart and more. She was always happy to play whatever their imaginations dreamed or just share a quiet snuggle together. I know she is now their guardian angel.

Love you mom ❤️

Amy Bower - August 08, 2022 at 10:37 PM

DV

Amy, I am so sorry to hear this! She sounds like she was a truly amazing person. My heart goes out to you and your family.

Danielle Vert - August 09, 2022 at 09:09 AM

AC

Amy, so so sorry for you and family. You are such a strong woman so I know your mom must have been the same. Thinking of you!

Ashley Copp - August 09, 2022 at 10:15 AM

AK

Dear Colleen,

I will never forget you. You were one of the nicest people I had the pleasure of knowing. I always so enjoyed Happy Hour with you and Howard on Betty's porch. I will miss you.

Aileen

Aileen Konz - August 09, 2022 at 09:04 PM

BE

“ My dear, dear friend. There are no words. But there are good memories. You taught me so much. Some advice I followed. Some I did not and wish I had. You will always be in my heart.

Betty - August 08, 2022 at 08:29 PM

CH

“ Colleen stood up in my wedding. Also was one of the original “bowling babes”, a great partner in our ethnic dinners and many memories up north. As time past we didn't see much of one another but when we did meet it was like we saw each other just the other day. One great memory from our dinners was her liver soup! Wrecked her blender making it. She will always be in our hearts and mind.

Carol Healy - August 08, 2022 at 03:21 PM



“ *Delightful Dieffenbachia was purchased for the family of Colleen Marie McKerracher.*



August 08, 2022 at 03:16 PM



“ *Maybe it was the little things: her smile, her contagious laugh, her hugs, her energy, her humility, the brightness in her eyes when you asked about Davis and Leah and her love for them and her children. Her thoughtfulness, (always making a small dish of whatever it was, with NO onions, just for me), and sending out cards to celebrate friends' special occasions. She is my inspiration to exercise and to keep moving. These are just some of what I experienced knowing Colleen. Her spirit will always be in my heart, I love her.*

Debbie Bokuniewicz - August 08, 2022 at 02:17 PM



“ *We have known Howard and Colleen for a few years and have enjoyed their company. Colleen was definitely a sweetheart and was a ray of sunshine. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Howard and family. She is shining down on all us.*

pat and Joe Rashid - August 08, 2022 at 02:12 PM



*The last thing you said to us was "keep smiling", well we're smiling through our tears today. We will miss your beautiful smile and all your energy. You'll never be forgotten.
Love, Dan and Bev Bastian*

Dan and Bev Bastian - August 09, 2022 at 03:47 PM

TB

When Tom and I talk about Colleen it IS all the little things about her. She was such a good listener. We loved her laugh...it was the best laugh. We were fortunate that she and Howard came down here to Florida in "Season" so that we could get together and enjoy a Super Bowl Party, or a girls' lunch. She is my inspiration too...to keep moving. I loved to listen to her stories about the many hikes she and Howard enjoyed..."Just Keep Moving"...such good advice. When I walk now, I will take Col with me...and Howard...our hearts go out to you and your family...We Loved Her Too. Tom and Sara Baluk.

Tom and Sara Baluk - August 11, 2022 at 10:56 AM