



Joan Arlene Vary

April 29, 1943 - June 19, 2024

Joan Arlene Vary, aged 81, of Canton, Michigan, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on Wednesday, June 19, 2024. She was born to Gerald and Coral Hondorp in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1943. She and John "Jim" Vary met during their high school years and the two continued their education at the University of Michigan. Joan was a proud alumna, graduating in 1966 with a degree in nursing.

They married and went on to have four children – Lisa (David), John (Vanessa), Craig (Kelly), and Chris (Deborah). Shortly after Lisa was born, Joan and Jim's careers took them to Maryland. Over the next few years, John was born followed by twins Craig and Chris. Fun fact: Joan and Jim were surprised to discover they were expecting twins! The doctor realized there was another baby only after delivering Craig, and that's when Chris was born. In 1978, the family moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, before settling in Canton in 1982.

Joan finished her career at the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital where she excelled as a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit RN (NICU) from 1983-2006. Joan loved providing compassionate care for many premature or unstable newborn infants and their families.

A true-blue Michigan Football fan, her happiest days were game-day

Saturdays. When attending games at The Big House, she would arrive early enough to watch the marching band enter the stadium. She loved staying for the post-game show as the band always performed “Temptation” and the “Hawaiian War Chant” songs, because, as the announcers have proclaimed since the mid-1960s – “you can’t have one without the other.”

She found community, faith, and friends within her church at St. Michael Lutheran, Canton, Michigan. Musically, she performed for many years with the Plymouth Oratorio Society Choir and Bell Choir concerts at St. Michael Lutheran Church and Ward Presbyterian Church.

In retirement, Joan loved spending time with Buffy, her Maltipoo dog. Joan’s kids oftentimes referred to Buffy as “her favorite child, by far.” Joan also enjoyed spending time at The Canton Summit, for water aerobics classes and relaxing in the hot tub.

Joan is survived by her children, their spouses, and twelve grandchildren – John William in Colorado; Victoria in Michigan; Addison, Jackson, and Connor in Texas; and Hunter, Mackenzie, Kingston, Tatum, Griffin, Delaney, and Everly in Australia.

She is also survived by her former husband, Jim (Carolyn), sister Barb Fetrow, sister-in-law Debra Hondorp, and nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She is predeceased by her parents, Gerald and Coral Hondorp, and her older brother, Thomas (Debra) Hondorp.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at St. Michael’s Lutheran Church, in Canton, Michigan on Friday, July 19th, gathering starting at 10 AM until the 11 AM service.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations to the Brandon NICU Fund (<https://giving.umich.edu/um/w/brandon-neonatal-icu-gift-fund-365648>) – this organization provides specialized equipment for NICU babies, refreshments in family waiting rooms, and educational materials for parents. Thanks, and GO BLUE! Always!

Previous Events

Gathering of Family and Friends

JUL 19. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Michael Lutheran Church
7000 N. Sheldon Road
Canton, MI 48187

Celebration of Life Service

JUL 19. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Michael Lutheran Church
7000 N. Sheldon Road
Canton, MI 48187