



Niki Janine Tilwick

July 19, 1946 - December 31, 2025

Niki Janine Tilwick passed away on Wednesday morning, December 31, 2025, at Trinity Health Livonia Hospital in Livonia, Michigan, at the age of 79, in the presence of her devoted sister, Robin (Michael Gerhard) Tilwick of Plymouth. Niki was born on July 19, 1946 in Detroit to Richard and Betty (Nicholson) Tilwick. She received her bachelor's degree in teaching from Central Michigan University and then continued her education by receiving a master's degree from the University of Michigan.

Niki taught English and Journalism at Hilbert Junior High School in Redford Township until her retirement, more than 30 years later. During her career at Hilbert, Niki was very active in the teachers union. She was an ardent representative and advocate for the causes of her fellow teachers. In addition, she showed herself to be a true English professional—not only by helping her students to read and write, but also by her own love of reading. Niki was rarely seen without a book in her hands.

She had a great passion to see all live theater . . . Shakespeare and more.

Starting at a young age, she made annual trips to the Stratford Festival in Stratford, Ontario, Canada to see as many productions as possible.

Additionally, Niki maintained memberships at the Detroit Repertory Theatre, Wayne State University's Hilberry Theatre, and an assortment of theaters in Ann Arbor. Of course, she often went to the Inspire Theatre located right in her hometown of Westland.

Niki had a most incredible love for animals of all kinds. . . She always had a

pet dog or cat. In addition, she saved the lives of countless domestic and wild animals from all over the world. She donated whatever monies she could to rescue them. She became a vegetarian because of her ardent love for animals.

Niki was a world traveler who journeyed to countries across the globe. She always returned home with beautiful, valuable objects from each place she visited and proudly displayed them throughout her home. Over time, she transformed her home into a stunning museum. She also showered her friends and family with gifts from her many adventures.

Niki was easy-going and funny, known for her dry, intelligent wit and love for joking around. During her retirement, she was happy to sit on a couch talking or watching movies with friends and family, or trying out new restaurants. Her favorite soap opera was "Guiding Light," which she watched up until its final episode in 2009.

In addition to her sisters, Teri and Robin Tilwick, Niki is survived by her nephew, Christov Tilwick, of Plymouth, Michigan; her nieces, Gabrielle Fardella and Christina Roth, of New York City; her great-nieces, Kayla (13), Madeline (13), Violet (9), and Leandra (8), and great-nephew Blake (11), all of New York City.

She is also survived by her lifelong best friend, Jacqui Garcia and her daughter, Sylvia. Jacqui and Sylvia were deeply dedicated to loving and supporting Niki as if she were part of their own family. Also, Niki's wonderful caregiver, Olivia Seale, devoted herself in the last two years, to helping Niki with household tasks, providing physical assistance, and caring for Niki's adorable rescue cat, Buddy. Olivia and Niki enjoyed spending time together and formed a close bond. After Niki's passing, Olivia adopted Buddy, which would have made Niki SO happy.

In lieu of flowers, please consider honoring Niki's legacy of helping animals by making a donation, in her name, to World Wildlife Fund.

<https://protect.worldwildlife.org/page/92204/donate/1>

Arrangements entrusted with Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home.

To share a memory, please use the share a memory tab on this webpage.

Tribute Wall

EM

“ I was forever grateful to Niki for her unwavering support to the teacher’s union—the MEA and to me— an elected leader in Redford Union and also statewide. Niki had a strong sense of self and her ability to help young people through the formal education process Hence, at one point in our joint careers she became my Vice-President within the local Redford Union Education Association. She helped in all aspects: she taught in the junior high while I was in the high school. I was never caught unawares about a potential teaching problem with Niki at my side! And her sense of humor always softened the latest potential problem that had to be addressed. I will never forget her fervor for the teaching profession as a conduit to making this a better country. May she rest in peace to know that her zeal for instilling both junior high students and her adult companions with high—minded ideals for living in this complicated world will not be cast away, but fondly remembered. I can just hear one of our mutual friends opine, “Well, what would Niki say about that?” Niki was easy to love. —Elaine Miller (former President of Wayne County MEA-NEA, Redford Union High School English Department Chairman, and Niki’s friend.

Elaine Miller - February 10 at 11:08 AM

EM

Thanks for posting the above

Elaine Miller - February 10 at 11:11 AM

TE

Elaine--- Thank you so much for your thoughtful and caring comments. Niki told us, over the years, how much she admired and cared for you, too. ---Teri Tilwick

Teri - March 09 at 10:00 PM