



## Arlene Helen Ziesmer

October 9, 1945 - September 29, 2025

Arlene Ziesmer passed away on 9/29/2025 at the age of 79 years.

She was born to Finnish immigrants, Charles and Verna Kykyri of rural Deer Creek, MN and lived on a small farm where they raised many types of animals including mink. At the age of 17 she met and married the love of her life Gordon F. Ziesmer Sr an Air Force man stationed in Wadena, MN at that time. During their time in Wadena, they were blessed with two children, Roxanne and Maxine. Later they would move to Hahn Air Base in Germany where their son Gordon F. Ziesmer Jr. (Buddy/Bud) was born. As a devoted mother and wife, Arlene was always ready to do what it takes to assist their family. When the children were small, she would occasionally take part time work when things were tight and they needed additional income.

Gordy and Arlene were fond of the rural life and wanted to teach their children the beauty of living on a farm. Together in 1975, they purchased and moved their family to a 160-acre grain/hobby farm near Brooten, MN. Gordy ran the grain farm and Arlene ran the hobby farm. She raised all the animals the family needed for food and tended a very large potato and vegetable garden. She even raised two goats for milk! She was very industrious and could build (with a little help from Gordy) anything she set her mind to; building a deck, a front porch, a chicken coop, rabbit hutches etc.

Arlene also was a passionate and talented artist. She could paint anything and on anything. Often, you would find her deep in thought as she produced her latest masterpiece. She would be so deep in thought that it was sometimes difficult to get her attention. One of her oil paintings, was of a German village and surrounding vineyards. This oil painting won best of show at the 1978 Waterama Art Show in Glenwood Minnesota.

The Minnesota drought years in the late 70's made it nearly impossible to make a living grain farming so, in 1979, they made the decision to sell the farm. Gordy reenlisted as Active-Duty Air Force and was initially assigned to the base in Minneapolis, MN and from there it was McClellan Air force base in Northern California.

With the children nearly all grown, Arlene wanted to spend more time with her husband so, at the age of 39, she joined the Air Force Reserve (the age cutoff is 40 years old). She breezed through basic training and technical school before rejoining her family in northern California in September 1980.

Due to health issues they decided to retire and move back to Minnesota in 1987. Arlene stayed in the Air Force as a reservist until February 1992. They bought a home on North Turtle Lake in Underwood, MN, where they enjoyed the outdoors for several years. Later, to be near their children and grandchildren they moved to St. Francis, MN. Arlene loved children and worked for the St. Francis school system as a para helping with the transportation of disabled children.

In 2009 Gordy suffered a debilitating stroke forcing them to move to Epiphany Assisted Living in Coon Rapids, MN for about 10 years. After Gordy's passing, Arlene then moved to Benedictine Assisted Living in Anoka, MN for the last 2.5 years of her life. While there, she was known for always having a smile on her face, laughing a lot, and a willingness to help anyone in need.

She is survived by daughters Roxanne (Dan) Peters, Maxine (Keith) Hogan, and son Gordon Jr./Bud (Donna) Ziesmer. Her 8 grandchildren; Kelly (Danny) Stevenson, Ben (Kelley) Peters, Ashley (Alex) Anderson, Danielle (Brandon) Sobczak, Garin (Sara) Hogan, Sierra (Nick) Markl, Brittany Ziesmer and Matthew Ziesmer. As well as 15 great-grandchildren. Also survived by one sister Eva (Frank) Stoderl.

Arlene was preceded in death by her parents Charles and Verna Kykyri, brother Erkki Kykyri, sisters Shirley Swanberg, Claudia Linder & Elvie (Rudy) Rousu.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT 7. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Church of the Epiphany (Coon Rapids)  
11001 Hanson Boulevard Northwest  
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

## Mass of Christian Burial

OCT 7. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Church of the Epiphany (Coon Rapids)  
11001 Hanson Boulevard Northwest  
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

## Graveside Service

OCT 16. 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM (CT)

Fort Snelling National Cemetery  
7601 34th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55450

# Tribute Wall

DZ

“ I will always remember her bright smile it was contagious! Also her laugh.

*Arlene taught me to crochet with crochet threads. I loved her from the time I met her. Which was on my honeymoon. My son and I came out here for a family wedding. While we were here Gordon and Arlene took us up to the little farm her mom lived. Her mom was as sweet and kind as Arlene was.*

*Those are some sweet memories I'll never forget.*

*Deb Ziesmer*

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**Deb Ziesmer** - October 03, 2025 at 11:03 PM