



Barbara Sauter Cracraft

March 17, 1938 - December 29, 2025

Barbara (Sauter) Cracraft

Barbara Cracraft, beloved wife, mother, nana, aunt, and friend, passed away peacefully on December 29, 2025. Born on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1938, in Chicago, Illinois, she was the only child of George Norman and Cecelia "Ceil" (Curran) Sauter. Barbara grew up surrounded by a large, Irish/German extended family as her parents were both the eighth of nine children. She was raised in the Chicago suburbs and her parents firmly encouraged her love of learning and advanced education.

Barbara graduated from the College of St. Teresa, an all-women's college in Winona MN, with a BS in Nursing - a profession that became both her vocation and her identity. She was a gifted nurse, working in general medicine and renal care at Abbott and Hennepin County Hospitals, and later as a triage nurse for Fairview and Park Nicollet clinics. She was also the unofficial "ask a nurse" hotline for her entire family, fielding questions, offering reassurance, and sharing her deep well of knowledge with calm practicality. Nursing also brought Barbara together with her "spiritual sister" and friend, Joyce Wood Shortino.

In 1965, Barbara married Jerome "Jerry" Cracraft, and together they bought a home in South Minneapolis, where she lived for more than 45 years. They

raised three children together - Sheila, Rich, and Sue - who she loved fiercely and unconditionally. She was a devoted mother and later a deeply cherished Nana, known for her dry sense of humor, her love of puns, and her ability to talk your ear off. She delighted in her six grandchildren-Lena, Sam, Carrie, Catie, Alex, and Taylor - often gifting them books and educational games that reflected her belief in curiosity and lifelong learning.

Curious, well-read, and politically engaged, Barbara was a proud "flaming liberal," a supporter of the League of Women Voters, Women Against Military Madness, and many progressive causes. She read the Star Tribune daily, along with Time, Sojourners, nursing journals, memoirs, fiction, and political history. She loved a good debate, a well-argued article, and any book that expanded her understanding of the world. A lifelong Catholic, Barbara found a spiritual home and progressive community at St. Joan of Arc, which she affectionately called "Crazy St. Joan's."

Travel was one of Barbara's greatest joys. She explored Italy, Ireland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Prague, and more - sometimes with friends, sometimes with her daughters, and often with a concert ticket tucked into her itinerary. She once spent an entire trip in Italy wearing the same purple pantsuit after her luggage was lost, a story she retold with her signature dry humor. Music was her constant companion and she held season tickets to the MN Opera, Chopin Society, and Schubert Club for years and enjoyed concerts with friends and family. Barbara also loved to drive - sometimes a little too fast - and she enjoyed the independence and adventure that came with being behind the wheel. She was a lover of all things chocolate always ready for a glass of quality box wine, which she kept chilled and ready in the fridge without a hint of apology.

Barbara is survived by her children Sheila Cracraft Fehler (Dan), Rich Cracraft (Lora), and Susan Cracraft (Brent Pederson); her grandchildren Alex and

Taylor Cracraft, and Lena, Sam, Caroline, and Cathleen Fehler; many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends who cherished her.

Those who knew Barbara will remember her as someone interesting to talk to, who cared deeply, and who lived with curiosity and conviction. You knew you were loved when she bestowed newspaper clippings on you with topics she intuited would interest you. She was a woman of intellect, humor, and heart - a mother who loved fiercely, a Nana who delighted in her grandchildren, and a friend who always showed up. Her legacy lives on in the stories she told, the values she lived, and the family she loved so well.

Visitation Thursday, January 8 from 4-7pm at Washburn-McReavy Nokomis Park Chapel, Minneapolis. Funeral service Friday, January 9 at 11am at St. Joan of Arc Church with visitation 1 hour prior. In lieu of flowers, please donate to WAMM, St. Joan of Arc Church, or Bridging MN.

Cemetery Details

St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery (Mpls)

4403 Chicago Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 8. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Nokomis Park Chapel
1838 E. Minnehaha Parkway
Minneapolis, MN 55407
(612) 721-1651
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Funeral Service

JAN 9. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St. Joan of Arc Roman Catholic
4537 3rd Ave South
Minneapolis, MN 55409

Tribute Wall



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Barbara Sauter Cracraft.*



January 08 at 01:00 PM



“ *Kari Polasek planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Barbara Sauter Cracraft.*

Kari Polasek - January 08 at 01:00 PM



“ *Irma Turner and Bobbi Turner purchased the Encanted Cottage for the family of Barbara Sauter Cracraft.*



Irma Turner and Bobbi Turner - January 06 at 02:09 PM



“ *Love, Tom and Kathy purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Barbara Sauter Cracraft.*



Love, Tom and Kathy - January 05 at 03:02 PM