



## Barbara J. Hoelscher

April 18, 2014

Hoelscher, Barbara J. Age 76, of Golden Valley, passed away peacefully on Good Friday, April 18, 2014, surrounded by loved ones. Barb was born on October 16, 1937 in La Crosse, Wisconsin, the daughter of Berdeen Gerhart and June Rose Thorson. Both her parents grew up on farms in Houston County, and a connection to relatives in rural Minnesota remained important to Barb throughout her life. Barb and her sister Jo were raised in Robbinsdale, Minnesota, where Berdeen worked for Greyhound and June at Honeywell. After high school, she studied nursing at Hamline University in St. Paul. In addition to earning the degree that proved the foundation for her career, she met a young engineering student. Doug Hoelscher became not only the love of Barb's life, but also her best friend, travel companion, confidant, and, in her later years, her devoted caregiver. After early years in La Crescent, Minnesota, and then in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Barb and Doug eventually returned to the Twin Cities. Their Golden Valley home became a loving place to raise a family and to welcome generations of friends. Together with Doug, Barb became the parent of three children and found a calling for which she was uniquely qualified; her incomparable patience, enduring optimism, and big-hearted empathy entwined to form the perfect mother. Barb threw herself into motherhood with gusto, doing countless things, large and small, for her children: she was Cub Scout Den Mother for two sons; she hand sewed dresses for her daughter, from preschool to high school homecoming; she typed children's school reports on her manual typewriter; she drove long

distances to deliver children to college or to meet a future spouse. And when the next generation arrived, she wholeheartedly embraced her new role of grandmother, rarely missing a grandchild's dance performance or athletic event, playing with dolls on the living room floor, traveling to exotic locations. She worked for many years as a nurse at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, and then, after retirement, served as a volunteer at the Minnesota Historical Center, Wilder East Care Center in St. Paul, and St. Therese of New Hope Care Center. Although raised at a time when girls were more likely to play jacks than sports, Barb eventually became an award-winning athlete. She began running at the Western Kentucky University's track, using the long jump pit as a sandbox for her three small kids. Eventually, she went on to run three marathons, with a personal best of 3:50, and took up bicycle racing in Wisconsin and northern Minnesota. Between biking and running, Barb won over 100 athletic events, including the Minnesota 10k Championship. Bicycles were not just for racing, however. With Doug and a group of good friends, she embarked upon epic tours along the Rhine, Danube, and Elbe rivers in Europe, and along the Erie Canal in Upstate York and trails in Wisconsin, northern Idaho, and Minnesota. When not riding their bicycles, she and Doug crisscrossed the country in their camper. Adventurous, friendly, and outgoing, Barb excelled at friendships. She was always willing to help others and quick to put their interests ahead of her own. Everyone who had contact with Barb discovered someone whose authenticity was palpable and optimism infectious. These qualities proved essential when diagnosed with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) in September 2010. She received excellent treatment for this bone marrow cancer at Rochester's Mayo Clinic for nearly four years; her family wishes to express its deep gratitude for the loving care she received from the nurses, physician's assistants, and doctors on station 7-4 at the Mayo Methodist Hospital, where she was treated as family. Eventually, her long fight with MDS finally became too much for this fine woman. Barb was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her husband, Douglas Hoelscher; her sister, Jo Thorson Kelly; her children,

Steven Hoelscher (Kristen Nilsson), Donna Olson (Jeffrey Olson), and Scott Hoelscher; her grandchildren, Erika and Emma Hoelscher, and Angela, Tommy, and Jack Olson; and many cousins, nieces, and nephews. A memorial service will be held on Wednesday, April 23, with visitation at 10 AM, and service at 11 AM at Spirit of Hope Methodist Church, 7600 Harold Ave, Golden Valley, MN 763-545-0239. A reception at the church will follow. Memorial contributions may be made to Spirit of Hope Methodist Church.