



Darla Joyce Gilbertson

April 25, 1949 - February 13, 2024

Darla Joyce Ripley Gilbertson passed away on February 13, 2024 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. Darla was born April 25, 1949 in Buffalo Center, Iowa to Richard and Joyce Ripley. She grew up on a farm west of Elmore, Minnesota, the third of four siblings. She went to the Elmore Public Schools, graduating in 1967. She graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1972. While at the U, she met the love of her life, Roger Gilbertson, and the two were married on June 23rd, 1973.

Her first teaching job was in Slayton, Minnesota followed by a job at Rockford High School. Together, Darla and Roger had two sons, Jeffrey and Steven. Being a mom was truly her greatest vocation and she was the best mom a kid could ever hope for. Her love was exemplified by her daily e-mails and Sunday night phone calls once Jeff and Steve headed off to college (and beyond.)

Darla served as a GED examiner for those seeking to get life back on track and was a long-time German teacher in the Hopkins School District, retiring in 2007.

After retirement, she volunteered in a number of capacities, including as an ELL teacher and at the ICA Food Shelf.

Darla's interests were numerous and varied, and she always sought to find joy in all she did and inspired others to do the same. She loved reading and even tried her hand at writing children's books. She loved traveling, including taking many trips to Germany both personally and professionally, leading trips with student groups.

Music was a major part of her life, winning the John Philip Sousa award in high school, playing in the St. Louis Park Community Band, serving as a pianist and organist at her church, and instilling in her two sons a deep love of music. The three of them could often be found singing and playing songs around the piano.

She liked staying active, going on regular walks and bike rides. She loved baking and made the best chocolate chip muffins and caramel rolls enjoyed by all.

And very importantly, she was an amazing grandmother to her four grandchildren, taking them to plays at the Old Log Theatre, writing letters, and immersing herself in childhood play.

Her greatest gift was her ability to love others fiercely and unconditionally, a love that was felt by her friends, family, and all that knew her. A close family member accurately summed up Darla's disposition, calling her, "Easily the sweetest gal I ever knew." She had a way of conversing with people that helped them feel cared about and understood. She made it a point to show up for people at the right time and in the ways that mattered most.

She was truly one of a kind and will be missed more than words can describe.

Darla is survived by her loving husband of 50 years, Roger Gilbertson; brothers, Steve (Janice) Ripley, Roger (Gail) Ripley, Verlyn (Brenda) Ripley;

sons, Jeff (Nicolle) and Steve (Jessica); and grandchildren, Amri, Eli, Gavin, and Harper.

The family would like to thank the staff at Trouvaille for the exceptional care and love they showed through the last years of Darla's life.

Memorials in honor of Darla can be directed to the ICA Food Shelf or BeneTrou. Inc.

We look forward to remembering and honoring Darla at a Celebration of Life on Saturday, April 13th at University Hall, McNamara Alumni Center at the University of Minnesota. Social gathering to begin at 10:00 am. Program at 11:00 followed by a light lunch. To help with planning, kindly RSVP to Jeff Gilbertson if you are able to attend: jeff.gilbertson31@gmail.com. For those unable to attend in-person, a livestream will be available for the 11:00 am service on April 13th: <https://watchitlivestream.com/d-gilbertson/>.

Previous Events

Social Gathering

APR 13. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

University Hall, McNamara Alumni Center
200 SE Oak St
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Celebration of Life

APR 13. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

University Hall, McNamara Alumni Center
200 SE Oak St
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Celebration of Life for Darla Joyce Gilbertson in memory of Darla Joyce Gilbertson



Washburn-McReavy - April 02, 2024 at 03:19 PM



“ Darla was my tried and true extraordinaire volunteer in my adult ELL class at Adult Options in Education. What a jewel, gem and friend. We loved Darla! Susan Ault and her ELL class in Hopkins.

Susie Ault - February 28, 2024 at 10:02 AM

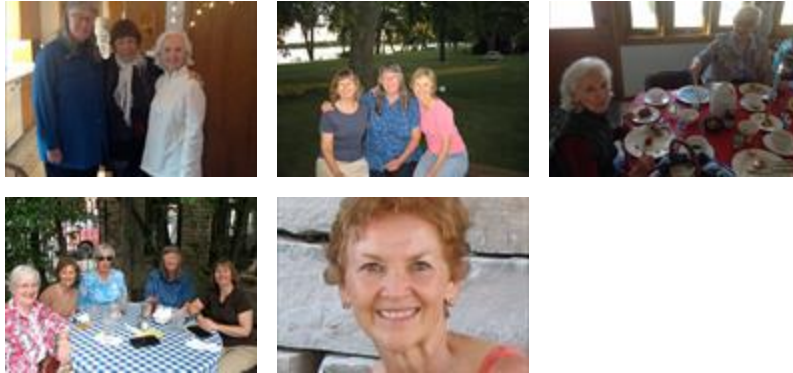
RA

“ Darla war wirklich eine sehr liebenswürdige und aufgestellte Person. Eine die man nie vergessen kann, obwohl wir sie seit 1996 nie mehr gesehen haben, aber die schönen Erinnerungen bleiben bestehen. Es schmerzt us schon wenn man bedenkt wieviele Jahre sie und auch ihre Angehörigen leiden mussten. Wenn Du einmal Roger treffen solltest, lass ihm unser herzlichstes Beileid aussprechen.

RA - February 22, 2024 at 09:25 PM

PA

“ 18 files added to the album Darla Photos



Paula - February 21, 2024 at 10:50 AM

PA

“ Dear Roger and Family. I'm so sorry for your loss. Darla was truly amazing. I could write volumes about all the experiences I had with Darla. She was a talented tenor sax player, and we loved being with her in the St. Louis Park Community Band. She was an exceptional teacher of German, having an especially fine way of connecting with students. The productions she put on with her elementary students were so folksy, entertaining, and musical. She accompanied students skillfully on her accordion. She was a super-fun traveling companion on our trips to Germany with students and was always so patient when challenging situations presented. She, with Margaret Perry and me, was instrumental in starting the "KINO" group (Germany-speaking teachers and friends) about 40 years ago, and it is still functioning. Darla was with the group until ~early 2020. What a treasure! She will be greatly missed. Roger and family, I wish you peace and comfort as you maneuver through the challenges of grieving. Paula

Paula - February 18, 2024 at 01:45 PM

ER

“ Dear Roger and Family, I share in your loss. I well remember our childhood years as Ripley first cousins...playing together at Grandma Ripley's, Ripley dinners, playing Annie Oakley, and singing/playing piano. As we grew older, we remained in contact although irregularly as our lives as spouses/moms took a larger role in our lives. Yet, we found time for an occaional lunch to catch up and a bit of golf. Then, the Rivard Cousins events brought us back together. I remember the reunion in Albuquerque, NM...our walk and Darla saying to me "You know, don't you...". I said "Yes" and we resumed our walk. I thank you all for being there for Darla during these final sad years. With hugs, Cousin Elsie (Herrmann) Rivard

Elsie Ann RIVARD - February 17, 2024 at 10:50 AM

NA

“ Steve, I am very sorry for the loss you and your family have experienced. I hope you all find inspiration and peace in these coming days.

- Nick Andrisevic

Nicholas Andrisevic - February 15, 2024 at 10:51 PM