



## Dianne Marie Kaatz

April 21, 1944 - October 31, 2023

Dianne Marie Kaatz, 79, passed away October 31, 2023. "Mama Kaatz," as she was referred to by many who loved her and considered her a second mother, was preceded in death by her husband Michael, parents Arthur and Esther Gunderson, and brother David. Born April 21, 1944 in Ottawa, Illinois, she graduated in 1962 from Marseilles High School in Marseilles, Illinois. After high school, she moved to Moorhead, Minnesota, where she graduated from Concordia College in 1966, earning a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Elementary Education and a minor in Social Work. That autumn, she started teaching in Columbia Heights, Minnesota. Throughout her 34-year career in education, she taught third, fourth and fifth grades. While she retired from teaching in 2000, she wasn't yet done working and moved on to a second career at Enclos Corp. She spent the next 20 years in what she considered her dream job as their receptionist, retiring in 2021. Her co-workers at Enclos remember her greeting every employee each morning with a smile, and keeping her candy dish constantly full. In 20 years there, Dianne said she never had a bad day.

While she loved working, what she cherished most were her family and friends. She had an incredibly close and special bond with her granddaughter Kaitlyn. Dianne taught Kaitlyn to drive, how to play cribbage, and the importance of starting weekend mornings with cheesy eggs. She enjoyed visiting her daughter Angie in Montana. In fact, Dianne's last big trip was with

her oldest daughter Rose and granddaughter Kaitlyn when they drove to Montana. Rose remembers how thrilled Dianne was to finally see Mount Rushmore along the way.

Dianne could often be found talking on the phone to one of her two sisters. As a former teacher she was an avid reader and also loved word play. In fact, every evening while watching "Wheel of Fortune," she called her friend Paul to catch up, and bond over their love of the game show. When not watching the Wheel, she could also be seen laughing at her favorite show "The Big Bang Theory." An animal lover, she cherished several dogs over the years.

Over the years, she loved target shooting, fishing, sewing and - most notably - heading to the casino for endless games of Keno with her casino buddy Greg, whom she called the "son she never had."

For her friends and family, this will be the first year in memory that they don't find her annual Christmas letter waiting for them in the mail. Every year, she wrote a beautiful narrative summing up the previous year, commemorating every memorable moment she shared with those close to her. For many, the arrival of that letter was a highlight of the holidays.

The most important thing people should know about Dianne is the strength and bravery she showed during her years-long fight against cancer. She was first diagnosed in 2009 with Myelodysplastic Syndrome, a cancer of the bone marrow. A few years later, she was diagnosed with Leukemia, and at one point, was given mere months to live. However, she outlived expectations, never losing her positive attitude, her gracious spirit, or her infectious smile.

During her last days, Dianne was surrounded by friends and family. She is survived by daughters Rosemarie Thibodo and her fiancé Matt Dillon of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Angie Kaatz and partner Malcolm Best of Lakeside,

Montana; granddaughter Kaitlyn Thibodo; sisters Eloise (Brad) Erickson and Linda Buckingham; and several beloved nieces and nephews.

Visitation for Dianne will be held Thursday, Nov. 9 at Washburn McReavy Funeral Home, 2300 West Old Shakopee Road in Bloomington, MN, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Funeral services will begin immediately following visitation at 12:00 pm, also at Washburn McReavy funeral Home. A short and intimate burial service will be held Friday, Nov. 10 at the Wildwood Cemetery in Cohasset, MN. at 1:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Dianne's name can be made to the American Cancer Society at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

# Cemetery Details

## Wildwood Cemetery

Cohasset, MN 55721

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 9. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Bloomington Chapel  
2300 W. Old Shakopee Road  
Bloomington, MN 55431  
(952) 884-8145  
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

## Chapel Service

NOV 9. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Bloomington Chapel  
2300 W. Old Shakopee Road  
Bloomington, MN 55431  
(952) 884-8145  
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

## Graveside Service

NOV 10. 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM (CT)

Wildwood Cemetery  
Cohasset, MN 55721



# Tribute Wall



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dianne Marie Kaatz.*



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November 08, 2023 at 05:29 PM



“ *Friends from The Old Country Buffet purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Dianne Marie Kaatz.*



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**Friends from The Old Country Buffet** - November 06, 2023 at 04:24 PM



“ *I met Dianne through my then fiance who was a close friend of Dianne's husband, Mike. Dianne and I developed a strong friendship through the years. I loved Dianne's sense of humor and her interest in so many things. Dianne made us pumpkin pie for dessert one evening and the crust was so thick we couldn't cut it with a fork. My hubby and I complimented her on it because the filling was delicious! Mike being Mike went out to the garage and brought in a saw to cut the crust! We all had a good laugh over his antics! I will miss Dianne very much! She was a kind and caring person throughout her life!*

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**Sharen Martin** - November 04, 2023 at 11:43 PM

TK

“ Theresa & Rachel Dekreon & all the kids planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dianne Marie Kaatz.

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**Theresa & Rachel Dekreon & all the kids** - November 04, 2023 at 09:48 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Dianne Marie Kaatz.



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November 04, 2023 at 09:48 PM