



## Dixie Polzin-Dufrene

January 9, 1936 - July 27, 2020

Dixie Lee Cavanaugh Polzin DuFrene, 84, went to be with the Lord peacefully on July 27, 2020. She is survived by husband Oliver DuFrene; children Kim Polzin (Jeff Benny), Chris Polzin (Amy), Jonathan Polzin, and Jennifer Polzin (Roxanne Cornell); grandchildren Ty Benny, Jason and Nicholas Polzin, Jonathon (Alizah) and Michael Patterson and Erika (James) Crawford; great-grandchildren Kira, Damian, and Alyce Polzin, Affaan and Ameen Patterson; and stepsons Doug, Ron, Brian and Dan DuFrene and their families. Dixie Lee is preceded in death by husband Rodney O. Polzin; parents Fred and Catherine (Babe) Cavanaugh; brother Clark Cavanaugh; great-granddaughter Rory Polzin; and many other relatives and friends.

Dixie Lee was born January 9, 1936, in Webster, SD, where she attended a one-room country school before graduating from Webster High School. She often told of fishing with her father before school (even ice fishing in the winter, to hear her tell it). During her high school years, Dixie stayed with her grandmother in town during the week in order to participate in after-school activities, then going home to the family farm for the weekends. Her grandmother would often send her home on Friday evenings with a warm, homemade kraut strudel for the family's dinner. Dixie was particularly proud of helping her grandmother, an Austrian immigrant, study for the US citizenship test – Grandma Marko passed with flying colors!

Rodney Polzin had visited cousins in Webster to go grouse hunting. The teen boys' attention was diverted by the high school homecoming dance, where Rod met Dixie and the rest was history. In January 1955, Dixie left Northern State University after one semester to marry Rod. They moved to St. Paul. She worked for Northwest Orient Airlines, leaving to become a full-time mom.

Dixie and Rod enjoyed family life with their two daughters and two sons, moving to New Brighton and then Columbia Heights. The couple spent countless hours playing pinochle (Polzin rules) and on monthly outings with the KEGAPOOPS social group. Dixie was active in the PTA, Mrs. Jaycees organization, First Lutheran Church and Sunday School and as an election judge. She also worked part-time as a bookkeeper and dental assistant. She likely attended every summer parade (and some winter ones, too!) throughout Minnesota when her sons represented Columbia Heights and the Minneapolis Aquatennial as junior commodores, and her oldest daughter marched in the high school band.

When she was widowed at the young age of 40, Dixie returned to college and earned an Associate of Arts degree from Anoka-Ramsey Community College. Determined to make a difference in the lives of other families facing heart disease and defects, she established a career at Medtronic. At Medtronic, she edited the Quality newsletter and especially enjoyed working with RISE to hire persons with disabilities and other challenges. Dixie retired in 1993.

Meanwhile, Dixie joined the Single Parents Christian Fellowship, where she met Oliver DuFrene and embarked on an adventurous new chapter of life. Ollie and Dixie married in August, 1982. They traveled the world, seeing 18 countries including China and all of Europe. For several of these trips, they retraced steps (or flights) Ollie had taken while serving as a Marine Corps pilot and navigator.

Dixie was a creative person, excelling at ceramics, sewing, quilting, knitting, embroidery, painting and cooking. She and Ollie collaborated on projects too, including a gazebo and a large family and dining addition to their home – Dixie designed and Ollie built.

After overcoming several hurdles in life (in her teens, Dixie learned to walk again after severe concussion and injuries suffered in a car accident; she returned to college as an adult learner; and she survived breast cancer, gallbladder surgery and several TIAs), Dixie was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. She was thrilled to participate in a clinical trial for Alzheimer's sufferers designed to find out if specific exercise regimes helped to extend memory skills.

Ollie devotedly cared for Dixie at home until the past three years, when Dixie received excellent care at Cerenity White Bear Lake's memory care unit. She especially enjoyed their music programs. Ollie visited every evening for dinner, and she greeted him with a big smile each time.

Memorials in Dixie's honor may be sent for the Music Program, attention Peg Black, Cerenity White Bear Lake, 1891 Florence Street, White Bear Lake, MN 55110. We like to think Dixie is still smiling and tapping her toes in heaven.

**SERVICES:** Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a celebration of Dixie's life will be held with a small gathering at 1:30 p.m. and service at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, August 7, 2020, at the Washburn-McReavy Hillside Chapel, 2610 19th Ave. N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55418. Internment will follow at Hillside Cemetery.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 7. 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Hillside Chapel  
2610 19th Avenue N.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55418  
(612) 781-1999  
[info@washburn-mcreavy.com](mailto:info@washburn-mcreavy.com)

## Memorial Service

AUG 7. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Hillside Chapel  
2610 19th Avenue N.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55418  
(612) 781-1999  
[info@washburn-mcreavy.com](mailto:info@washburn-mcreavy.com)

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dixie Polzin-Dufrene.*



August 06, 2020 at 02:13 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Dixie Polzin-Dufrene.*



August 06, 2020 at 01:55 PM



“ *WE LOVE YOU ALL! the Other One & Todd purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Dixie Polzin-Dufrene.*



**WE LOVE YOU ALL! the Other One & Todd** - August 04, 2020 at 04:38 PM



“ *Darlene Cavanaugh and family purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Dixie Polzin-Dufrene.*



**Darlene Cavanaugh and family** - August 03, 2020 at 08:15 PM

LK

“ *Kim, I was sorry to see the news about your mother. Thinking of you. - Leah Kondes*

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**Leah Kondes** - July 31, 2020 at 08:16 PM

AH

*We are very sorry to hear about Dixie's passing. I'm Remembering the days when she had good health....what a sweet person she was.  
ArDiS & Dick*

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**Ardis Haslach** - August 04, 2020 at 08:54 AM

ND

*Thinking of you and praying for comfort and peace for each of you at this sad time.*

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**Nadeane Diede** - August 07, 2020 at 03:48 PM