



## Marilyn Esther (Johnston) Estrem

July 19, 1938 - December 26, 2024

Marilyn Esther (Johnston) Estrem was born July 19, 1938 in Willmar, MN to Stanley and Gladys (Chalmers) Johnston. Marilyn grew up with one sister, Doris Johnston Brooks. Marilyn married John Carlisle Estrem on August 24, 1958. They had four children: LeAllan James, Karla Marie, Ethan Charles and Jonis Christopher.

Marilyn graduated from Decorah High School and Luther College in Decorah, IA. She majored in Business Education and Sociology. Her favorite job was when she had the opportunity to be a librarian. She loved being a wife and raising her four children. She was a stay-at-home Mom as much as she could. In about 1995 Marilyn started writing word puzzles, which were sent out once a week to family and friends. When she met Will Shortz, editor of the New York Times crossword puzzle, his influence helped Marilyn develop her own style.

Marilyn lived in four states. She and John traveled throughout the lower 48 states and 4 Canadian provinces. While traveling they took family photos, renewed friendships and accumulated historical information to update their families' histories. Marilyn's Ojibway name was Wandering Flower. Ojibway Grandma said Marilyn was like a stream flowing through life sharing her life with those around her. In her journey she listened and absorbed people's stories, histories and inner feelings.

Marilyn often said, "I am who I am."

Marilyn is survived by son LeAllan (Beth), daughter Karla (Mitch), and son Jonis (Mary); grandchildren, Julie Estrem, Eric Kraft (Martina), Angela Kraft (Brock), Ashton Booth; and daughter-in-law Karla Estrem. Preceded in death by her husband John Estrem; son Ethan Estrem; her parents; sister Doris Brooks; and newborn, sister Mary.

Marilyn died on December 26, 2024 at Maranatha Care Center in Brooklyn Center, MN. Memorial service will be on Tuesday, January 21 at 11 am with visitation 1 hour prior at Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Maple Grove, MN. Burial will be at North Washington Prairie Cemetery in rural Decorah, IA at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to Minnesota Landscape Arboretum or Decorah Public Library.

A livestream of the service may be viewed starting at 11 AM on Tuesday January 21 for those unable to attend at: <https://lordoflife.org/celebrationoflife>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 21. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Lord of Life Lutheran Church (Maple Grove)  
7401 County Road 101  
Maple Grove, MN 55311

## Celebration of Life

JAN 21. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Lord of Life Lutheran Church (Maple Grove)  
7401 County Road 101  
Maple Grove, MN 55311

# Tribute Wall

KD

“ Hello, this is Kris Dwyer. I was a Caregiver Consultant for your dear Dad years ago and had made visits to their home years ago. My sympathy is shared with the Estrem family. At the same time your parents are together once again. This was a very long journey, but I couldn't help but admire the strength and perseverance your Mom showed the world! I will never forget your Dad either. Such a dear man! I have lost both of my parents too, so my heart is with you. Kris 218-393-7003



Kristine L Dwyer - February 06, 2025 at 03:01 PM

DR

“ I am Donna Ronningen, and live at Binford ND. Marilyn and I were roommates at Mayville State College. Her father was a Professor there at the college. We stayed in touch for quite a few years after rooming together. So I recognize the names of all of her children, parents and Iowa connection. I was down to Decorah, Iowa for the wedding of Marilyn and John. I thought very highly of your dear mother. We had many fun times together at the dorm, classes and activities too! Sending you my love, hugs and sympathy for the loss of a wonderful person! I included her in my wedding also as a bridesmaid. It was an honor and a privilege to have had her as a friend. Thinking of all of you and pray for your comfort and strength.

Donna Ronningen - January 05, 2025 at 08:30 PM

KB

Thank you, Donna for sharing your kind thoughts and prayers. Our mother was a blessing. We are fortunate to have her as our mother. Blessings, Karla

Karla Booth - January 08, 2025 at 04:59 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Marilyn Estrem



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**LeAllan Estrem** - January 05, 2025 at 07:15 PM

MW

“ Our sympathy to the family, especially LeAllan. Who helped us on the farm and remember the “flat tire” on taking you home. This was in Sheyenne, North Dakota I the 70’s. Marie Williams.

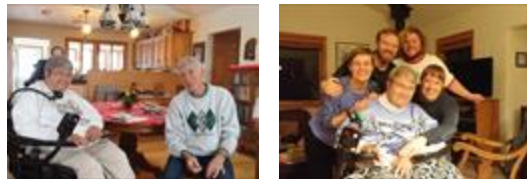


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**Marie Williams** - January 05, 2025 at 02:52 PM

LE

“ 2 files added to the album Marilyn Estrem

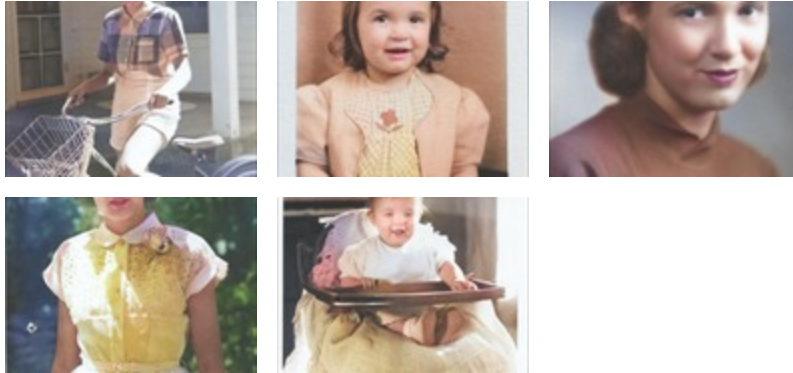


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**LeAllan Estrem** - January 04, 2025 at 05:46 PM

LE

“ 6 files added to the album Marilyn Estrem



LeAllan Estrem - January 02, 2025 at 11:28 AM

SK

“ It was a joy and privilege to know this dear lady. Her life taught me so much about faith, courage and patience. Some of her spirit will live on in my heart. Bless her memory! Bless her family! We know she is safely HOME. With love, hugs and prayers for all of you! Sue Klein, LaMoure, ND

Susan Klein - January 01, 2025 at 09:57 PM

KB

Thank you, Sue. You are a dear friend. Our love to you

Karla Booth - January 08, 2025 at 05:04 PM

MG

“ I am so sorry to hear of Marilyn loss. I always enjoyed it when I would bump into them at the Guthrie or along the north shore, and I always loved it when they came to visit at Christ Lutheran. Her gentle smile and quick intellect were always a joy. I had a stroke a little over a year ago and am living at episcopal homes in St. Paul. (I have a caring bridge page)  
My thoughts and prayers go out to all of you and may He hold her in His loving care  
Love, Margie Guelker

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**Margie Guelker** - January 01, 2025 at 04:27 PM

KB

*My parents thoroughly enjoyed seeing and visiting with you at Christ Lutheran.  
I will reach out to you. Thank you for your beautiful sentiment.  
Blessings and prayers to you, Karla*

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**Karla Booth** - January 08, 2025 at 05:06 PM