



Susan Elaine Hartley

December 18, 1944 - August 17, 2024

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Sue Hartley, a generous, creative, funny, down-to-earth yet elegant wife, mother, sister, aunt, and friend, peacefully passed away in the early hours of Saturday, August 17, 2024, at Regions Hospital in St. Paul, MN, after a short illness. She was 79.

Susie was a fun, loyal, energetic person with a list of lifelong friends as testament to her beautiful, engaging spirit. If a party was needed, Sue planned it. And to Sue, a party was always needed, often at a moment's notice. She spent her life making others feel welcome, comfortable and cared for, with her trademark wit and grace.

Sue was born in Waterloo, IA, on December 18, 1944, to Dorothy Uhlenberg Gruse and Lawrence Gruse, joining her two sisters Janice and Gail. When Sue was 3, the family moved to Sauk Centre, in west-central Minnesota, where she attended grade school and high school. After graduating from Sauk Centre High in 1962, she attended the University of Minnesota at Morris. In 1966, she launched her career in retail, as a buyer in domestics at Donaldson's department store in Minneapolis. Her attention to detail and people skills elevated her to the store manager position at Ridgedale. As a

buyer, Sue traveled extensively. One of her best friends from work, John Frankovich, decided Sue should meet Doug Hartley, his grammar school friend from Jackson Heights, NY.

Good work, John. Sue soon found a warm compatibility and enduring happiness with Doug, and they were married at Fort Snelling, on January 20, 1979. Their many friends loved the giggly charisma that surrounded them, and countless memories were made with the gang from Canterbury Court, including the progressive dinner parties that grew to require a double decker bus for transportation. In addition to other travels, including to Florence, Italy, Sue and Doug loved annual trips to Las Vegas, again making friends wherever they went.

When their daughter Ashley was born, a new love light entered their world. The three were a devoted, solid team, enjoying trips and sharing holidays and special occasions with precious family and friends. Sue was the glue, decorating madly for every holiday, arranging to attend Ashley's school activities, and encouraging her to follow her dreams. When Ashley met and married Eric White in 2022, Sue basked in their happiness, and one of her most joyous moments in life was dancing at their wedding. She adored Ashley, and proudly shared details with friends about her adventures.

Sue was comfortable in any situation, from attending multiple performances of "Phantom of the Opera" to sitting around the kitchen table with her sisters, drinking beer, laughing, and playing Rummy for money. At heart, she forever remained that girl from Sauk Centre.

Her Catholic faith was a pillar of strength for Sue and provided her with a deep sense of gratitude and a positive spirit, which sustained her through health challenges, the loss of her beloved Doug, and the trials and tribulations of being a Minnesota Vikings fan.

After leaving the retail world in 1994, Sue worked at CR Manufacturing in Mound, MN, and Dex Media. After years of making their home in Spring Park, Sue and Doug moved to Hopkins, making new friends there.

Sue is survived by her daughter Ashley and her husband Eric White of Topanga, CA; her sisters Janice Spehn and Gail Nelson of Sauk Centre; nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews; and many dear friends.

Sue was preceded in death by her parents, Dorothy and Lawrence Gruse; her husband Doug in 2016; her sister Joyce; brothers-in-law Don Spehn, James Nelson, and James Peterson; and a nephew, Kurt Nelson.

Visitation will be held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 13505 Excelsior Blvd, Minnetonka, MN at 10:00 AM, on Tuesday, August 27, 2024. Mass of the Christian Burial will follow, at 11:00 AM, at the IHM Church. A luncheon will follow the service, at 12:00 PM. Burial will be at 2:00 PM at Our Lady of the Lake Cemetery, 1425 County Rd 110 N, Minnetrista, MN.

Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Washburn-McGreavy Hopkins Chapel, Hopkins, MN; and Denise Sylvestre, IHM Pastoral Minister.

Sue's family prefers memorials to ResourceWest, 13231 Minnetonka Dr, Minnetonka, MN, 55305, (952) 933-3860. www.resourcewest.org/ways-to-support. Giving back to her community was important to Sue.

Our grief is enormous, and we appreciate the outpouring of unwavering support from all who loved Sue. We're forever grateful to the incredible team at Regions Hospital who cared for Sue in her last days.

Sue loved all kinds of music. She joked that she wanted the song "Spirit in the Sky" played at her funeral - so next time you hear it, we hope you'll smile and think of Sue.

Flowers fade, the fruits of summer fade
They have their season so do we
But please promise me that sometimes
You will think of me.

By Andrew Lloyd Webber, Charles Hart and Richard Stilgoe