



## Virginia V Empey

June 6, 1940 - April 15, 2026

Virginia (Jarosh) Empey, 85, born June 6th, 1940 at St. Gabriels Hospital located in Little Falls, MN. She passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on April 15, 2026, after a wonderful life, nurtured by the love of family and energized by many lifelong friends. Her parents were Andrew & Mamie (Yourczek) Jarosh. Virginia was the 4th child out of 7 siblings. Her childhood home was a farm outside of Little Falls, which became famous for the Winter Wonderland of Little Falls, also known as "The Little Switzerland of America". The site was 4 miles southeast of Little Falls. Andrew & Mamie's farmland was a perfect site for fun winter activities including ice skating, skiing and sledding. The annual Winter festival lasted from 1945 to 1949, which brought over 22,000 visitors including many famous dignitaries including Miss America.

She attended grade school through the 8th grade in District #54, which required walking 2 ½ miles to the local one-room school. Since the farm was remote, there was no bus service available. At age 12, Virginia contracted polio, which had no cure at this time. Grandma and Grandpa Jarosh had taken insurance out earlier in the year, which was a blessing. Her treatments prevented her from paralysis, and she slowly recovered with hot pack and intense physical therapies. In 9th grade, she attended Lindbergh High School for only one year since the school caught fire. As a sophomore, she transferred to St. Francis Catholic School for only one year. She completed her junior and senior year at Little Falls Public High School and graduated in

1958.

In 1954, she met the love of her life Ron Empey when they met at Falls Ballroom. They adored each other but would have to say goodbye since Ron enlisted in the US Army in 1955. After Ron was discharged, they were happily united in marriage on May 30th, 1959. For the next four years, they resided in Little Falls and were blessed with three beautiful daughters Lisa, Julie and Sue.

In 1964, the family moved to Anoka, MN for job opportunities. Virginia needed new furniture and wanted to meet new friends and accepted a full-time position with Hoffman Engineering located in Anoka. She was a customer service representative and continued to work at this company for 28 years, although there were some breaks during her career pursuing some other interests.

In 1970, she left Hoffman Engineering to be a stay-at-home mom and wanted to explore new hobbies and adventures. She discovered fishing, gardening, knitting, sewing, canning, baking, wood refurbishing, painting, card playing, motorcycling, traveling, garage sales, Girl Scout leader, and Kirby vacuum sales. Her brother (Conrad) was a distributor for Kirby, so she was trained and promoted quickly since she had a special talent for selling Kirby vacuum cleaners. Within a few months, she met and exceeded goals for Kirby and won 2 different trips to Las Vegas for her great sales. She was the only woman in the company that sold 17 Kirby's in one month within the entire Midwest region.

In 1975, the family moved to El Cajon, CA for new opportunities and to escape winter. This plan lasted 15 months and the family moved back to their same home and Ron and Virginia returned to their same jobs. Virginia continued to work at Hoffman Engineering in the Customer Service area until

she retired in 2000. She enjoyed her retirement, but she needed to get out of the house, so she accepted a position with Kohls. She loved the position of opening credit card accounts! Mom loved approaching customers and ended up opening the highest number of new accounts than anyone had ever done before. She resigned after 2 years since the standing was getting too difficult for her shifts.

After 12 years of chronic heart disease, Ron passed away in February 1992. Virginia continued to stay in their home and remodeled and landscaped the property. We are not sure how she made the decision to have all the mature trees removed on the property, but we figured it was some sort of grief therapy. Her faith and strength to move forward allowed her to stay in her home and be close to the neighbors she so loved and cherished. She had no intention of moving to a new location.

In 1993, she met Steve Heilman at a ballroom located in Gibbon, MN. They both enjoyed polka dancing and so their relationship began. It was discovered they both worked in Anoka and so their relationship grew. Polka dancing was their passion, and they would seek out any polka band that was playing in the state. If you watch "Polka Spotlight" or the "Mollie B Polka Show" you might even see them on one of many video tapings they participated in. They married on May 11th, 1996, and continued to live in Virginia's home until health difficulties separated them in January 2024. Steve was moved to a full-memory care facility and Virginia stayed in her home. In June 2024, it was determined she could no longer live independently and sold her home and moved into Tradition Senior Community, located in Brooklyn Park.

She transitioned to her new apartment quickly but missed her neighbors of 60 years. Her new community embraced Virginia immediately and she met so many new friends. Within months, she was focused on Traditions monthly

Resident Spotlight, since residents thought she was so special. Virginia was especially excited to have her favorite cousin Delphine Boser live in the same facility along with Carol Jensen, who was her neighbor for 60 years back in Anoka! She was so happy with her new home, amazing friends and community. The past few years, her health was declining although she never let her declining health define her. It was normal to see her smiling no matter what her critical care required. She struggled with CHF and respiratory difficulties and was placed in hospice last December 2025. During the past few months, she was able to stay in her same apartment, but with her amazing care teams and the grace of God, she passed away peacefully in her home.

She was preceded in death by her late husband, Ron Empey, daughter Susan Esler: parents Andrew and Mamie Jarosh; sister Adeline (Donald) Miller, Katherine (Gene) Chandler, She is survived by daughter, Lisa Empey, daughter Julie (Steve) DeMuth: grandchildren Abbie (Brian) Helmrick and their children Kiptyn, Lilia and Zander; grandchildren Sam Esler: She is survived by her husband Steve Heilman: sisters Rita Gardner, Irene Hansen, Diane Felix and brother Conrad Jarosh; many nieces, nephews and dear friends.

She was such a beautiful Mom and friend who touched so many with her warmth, strength, smile, kindness, love of family, friends and faith. She enjoyed social gatherings and any party that would bring family and friends together. Her greatest joy was watching her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow up. We have been blessed to share so many memories and will always be remembered for her love of life and all the relationships she treasured through her life. Virginia's faith was strong and carried her throughout her life and until her last breath. Her love and presence will be deeply missed and forever carried in the hearts of those who knew her. She truly was and will always be an angel.

Special thanks to Allina Hospice, Comfort Keepers (Osseo) and Tradition Care teams. She was provided with incredible support and guidance with the necessary care needed. Mom was never alone and always knew she was in the best hands possible. The Care Teams were like Angels watching over her and caring for her as if she was their own mom. Our family is so grateful for all your love and support.

A Mass of Resurrection and Celebration of Life will be held Thursday, May 28th, at 11:00 AM at St. Gerard Majella, 9600 Regent Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN. Visitation from 9:30-11:00 at St. Gerard Majella. Luncheon will be served following mass. Private interment will be held at Fort Snelling in July.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 28. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Gerard Majella Catholic Church  
9600 Regent Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

## Mass of Christian Burial

MAY 28. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St. Gerard Majella Catholic Church  
9600 Regent Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

# Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Virginia V Empey.*



May 27 at 09:17 PM



“ *In Heaven's Arms Bouquet was purchased for the family of Virginia V Empey.*



May 27 at 08:44 AM



“ *Abdul Akbar Khan lit a candle in memory of Virginia V Empey*



Abdul akbar khan - May 10 at 12:33 AM



“ *Abdul Akbar Khan sent a virtual gift in memory of Virginia V Empey*



Abdul akbar khan - May 10 at 12:32 AM