



Christine Ellen (Deering) Kuhnke

May 1, 1958 - January 20, 2020

Christine Ellen (Deering) Kuhnke passed away peacefully but unexpectedly in her sleep on Monday morning, January 20, 2020, at her cottage in Curtis, Michigan. Christy was born on May 1, 1958, in Traverse City to Daniel and Ann (Hageman) Deering. She married the love of her life, Larry Kuhnke, on October 6, 2006, in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Christy grew up in the family business, Tom's Food Markets, which her grandfather founded in 1946. She played, worked, and practically lived in the stores as a child and young woman. A 1976 graduate of Traverse City High School and captain of the TCHS cheerleading squad, she went on to pursue a business degree at Western Michigan University. After college, she began her professional career as a mortgage lender, choosing to work with low-income and first-time home buyers. She also assisted many veterans of the Armed Forces. In 2005, she returned to Tom's, joining her father in an executive role running the family business. As the company's president, Christy continued Tom's strong and fundamental commitment to the Traverse City community through the development and support of local farms and businesses. Her father and grandfather would have been proud of her success with Tom's, which was, in large part, due to her desire for perfection, her concern for people, and, most importantly, the mutual respect and appreciation she enjoyed with the Tom's family of employees.

Christy was dedicated to many charitable causes, including the community libraries in Old Mission and Interlochen, and she was an early contributor to Impact 100 TC, which combines the power of dynamic women to support and improve their communities. She was also a proud and very generous supporter of the City Opera House in Traverse City and the Erickson Center for the Arts in Curtis.

Christy felt very blessed to call Michigan home and enjoyed its natural beauty and bounty. In her earlier years, she was an avid snow and water skier, once challenging herself to water ski every day of a summer, which she did. Christy was known for her love of birds and flowers, and most florists knew to put a bird in the arrangements for her. In 2014, she and Larry built a cottage in Curtis in the Upper Peninsula, and crossing the Mackinac

Bridge was always, in her words, “a very fortunate experience.” Christy loved spending time there with visiting family and numerous friends, and on her last trip to Curtis she took with her an arrangement of flowers she had just received so she would not lose a single day’s enjoyment of them.

Christy and Larry traveled every year in the spring and fall to various warm climate destinations. In 2019, they took a rare summer vacation – a cruise to Alaska - which was the most favored of all the places Christy had traveled.

Christy was devoted to her many nieces, nephews, and grandchildren. She and Larry spent many happy days hosting family parties and spending time with family and friends at their home on Old Mission Peninsula.

Surviving Christy is her beloved husband Larry, her mother, Ann (Robert) Witkop, sisters Jane (Matthew) Zimmerman, Nancy (Ed) Sands, Carolyn (Tobin) Decker, Michelle (Ian) Sterling, and Wendy Witkop, stepdaughters Carol Kuhnke (Elizabeth Janovic) and Chris (Scott) DeJong, and many nieces, nephews, and grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her father, Daniel L. Deering.

Memorial services are scheduled as follows: Visitation on Thursday, January 30 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm at the Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home in Traverse City. Visitation is also scheduled for 10:00 to 11:00 am on Friday, January 31 at St. Joseph Catholic Church on Old Mission Peninsula with a Funeral Mass, officiated by Father Ben Rexroat, immediately following. Burial will be at Memorial Gardens as a private family service. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be directed to Impact 100 TC, 526 West Fourteenth Street, #264, Traverse City, MI 49685, www.impacttc.org. Kindly share thoughts and memories with Christy’s family at www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com.

Cemetery

Grand Traverse Memorial Gardens

3575 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI, 49684

Events

JAN 30 Visitation for friends and family 04:00PM - 07:00PM

Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home
305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

JAN 31 Visitation for friends and family 10:00AM - 11:00AM

St. Joseph Catholic Church
12675 Center Road, Traverse City, MI, US,
49686

JAN 31 Mass of Christian Burial 11:00AM

St. Joseph Catholic Church
12675 Center Road, Traverse City, MI, US,
49686

Comments



“ Dear Larry, Jane, Nancy, Carolyn, and my dearest friend, Ann, Sam and I are deeply saddened over the loss of your dear, beloved Christy. I hope you have found comfort in your faith, and the caring love from others. Christy was a beautiful person and loved by so many. May God be with you and your family,
Karen Mitchell (& Sam)

Karen Mitchell - February 19, 2020 at 11:20 AM



“ My condolences, so very sorry for your loss. I spent many fun hours on the east bay water skiing with Chris (and Jeff). Time passes much too quickly.
Jude Carlin

Jude Carlin - February 03, 2020 at 09:50 PM



“ I am deeply saddened by the passing of Chris. We worked together at Americor West Mortgage with Gary Yockey. Chris and I had a lot of fun together. She was such a fun person. Always laughing and making jokes. Just thinking of her makes me smile. I will miss her but feel truly blessed to have crossed paths with her.

Mary Beth Gentry

Mary Beth Gentry - February 01, 2020 at 03:12 PM



“ So very saddened and stunned to hear of Chris' passing. I worked with her many years ago when she was a mortgage originator. She was one of my most favorite people. Always so sweet and a super sense of humor. Always kept me laughing. She will be missed. My condolences to Larry and the entire family.

Vickie Mathis - January 31, 2020 at 09:21 PM



“ Christy,
You were my first neighbor and friend when we moved to Traverse City in 1993. We had so much fun as neighbors. I will never forget those days. We have remained friends to this day. You are one, very special friend--always interested in what was going on in my life and vice a versa. We did not get together as much as we should have over these last few years, but we both know life is busy and family is important. I always loved hearing from you and loved running into you whether it be at the airport, Tom's or wherever. What I loved the most was our dinner get-togethers. We would catch up on each other's lives in 3 hours and when I left for the night, I felt rejuvenated and feeling loved. I will miss you, my friend. I believe you are at peace and with God. It is just all of us, on earth, that are feeling the loss of you. Will miss you, your smile and your wonderful heart. Love you.
Annie

Annie Murphy - January 31, 2020 at 06:58 PM



“ Dear Ann and Bob,
I am so very sorry for the loss of your lovely daughter,Christine. I cannot even imagine the pain you must have. It's certainly not fair to lose a child—no matter how old they become we still think of our children as small tiny beautiful babies. Please accept a warm hug for each of you, may God help and direct you through this difficult passage. Love, Kathy Schafer

kathy schafer - January 31, 2020 at 09:04 AM



“ Larry, Jane, and Matthew, We can't make your pain go away but we want you to know we're here for you with a shoulder or an ear or anything else you need. Sharing in your sorrow with love and friendship. Tom and Eva Pointe

Eva Pointe - January 30, 2020 at 01:25 PM



“ Dear Nancy,
I am so sorry to hear of the sudden passing of your dear sister Chris. I will always remember her as the most beautiful cheerleader ever. I pray to God to give you and your family strength to heal your broken hearts. May she Rest In Peace with our Dad's and the many others we have lost and loved. God Bless.
Marie (Kratochvil) Petges

Marie Petges - January 29, 2020 at 06:38 PM



“ The American Military League Ladies Auxiliary was furnishing items to Veterans in assisted living homes with no family for Christmas. I met Christine to see if Tom's could donated some cookies/candy. She said "absolutely" and when she call and I went to pick up she had 17 beautiful clear containers full of cookies and candy with ribbons and bows on them. She was a gracious and wonderful person. May she rest in peace.

Andrea Anderson, President of Ladies Auxiliary - American Military League

Andrea Anderson - January 28, 2020 at 11:18 PM



“ Hello - I was a year ahead of Chris at Traverse City High School. I did not know her very well, but I saw her many times at sporting events and between classes at school. Any time I ran into her and we talked she was always so nice. I never saw her again after I left Traverse City around 1980, but I am so saddened to hear this. My sympathy and condolences to her many friends, relatives and family members.

Tom Rombouts

Tom W Rombouts - January 28, 2020 at 10:57 PM



“ Christine was a loving, thoughtful person. Larry, my condolences. Milly

Mildred Bender - January 28, 2020 at 07:17 PM



“ Jane and Larry, my deepest wishes for strength during this time. Still stunned at the news.

Sincerest Sympathies, Cindy Anderson and Family

Cindy Anderson - January 28, 2020 at 03:12 PM



“ Mommmmmmy Me too in the “Biz Bag “

I will miss you dearly and cherish every minute together on long lake with our Families !!

Summers from sunset to sun down ending with watching Johnny Carson !

Waiting for the blinds to open so we could come knocking at the door to get our towels positioned on our double wide dock with our Tab* and lemon , Crisco and iodine to get the best tan !

Throwing rocks out in the deep water so you could get use to the depth . Learning how to water ski together .. surf !! Disc

Every Sunday in the winter we would all get our snowmobiles out , have a bonfire on the ice (when frozen at least 7 inches).... you and Your beautiful Family are in every childhood memory I have many laughs , cheerleading , you at Central I at St Francis so competitive

How everything was perfect taking hours to get ready! Visiting you at WMU ... I a CMU Once again compilation Too much to mention !!

I will always keep you in my heart and in all my cherished times of growing up with the Best friend anyone could have asked for ! Gone to soon

anne Dechow - January 28, 2020 at 12:17 PM



“ Ann, Bob and Carolyn, I was so shocked and saddened to hear of Chris' passing. My prayers are with you and all the family. May God grant you peace.

Love to all,

Racine Rasmussen

Racine Rasmussen - January 28, 2020 at 12:23 AM



“ Dear Family,

My husband and I met Chris and her husband in passing in Petoskey.. Wonderful couple and got talking about our visit in Curtis, although we never seen one nother there. We were in Tom's many times in Traverse City. All I can say is what a wonderful couple and am very sadden by this news.

Colleen Myotte

Colleen Myotte - January 28, 2020 at 09:01 AM



“ Jane, my thoughts and prayers are with you, your family. Years ago when I worked marketing @ Father Fred, every year I witnessed you and your sister's hearts for the community and others. I remain impacted by you both. May God deeply bless you all with peace and love at this time. - donna

Donna Hogard - January 26, 2020 at 11:02 AM



“ Jane-

I am so saddened to hear of this and my thoughts are with you. I pray you can find peace during this time.

Cindy Whaley

Cindy Whaley - January 28, 2020 at 04:18 PM



“ You will be missed, not only by me, but by everyone who knew you, your laugh, your beauty, your smile, and your grace that you showed every time you came to toms west bay!! You are an angel now, I love you Christy Rest in peace !!

Carrie Green - January 25, 2020 at 10:51 PM



“ My deepest condolences to Chris' family and friends. I have such fond memories of Chris, her sparkling personality and contagious laugh. She was always someone I looked forward to spending time with at the Alpha Chi Omega sorority house. She had a big heart and I am so sorry for your loss. May she rest in peace and may God give you all strength in this incredibly painful time.

Cindy Biggs

Cindy Biggs - January 25, 2020 at 09:44 PM



“ My thoughts and prayers are sent your way. I am so sorry to have heard of Chris' passing. Chris and I were roommates in college, at Alpha Chi Omega - our sorority house, and later off-campus. We had a lot of fun together over the years at Western. Chris made friends easily - she was charming and always great to be around. Chris knew how to balance hard work and fun.

A few times we would hit the road for a quick trip up to TC to get away. Chris's dad wouldn't let us leave town without a trip to Tom's. Once, after-hours, he flipped on the lights and let us fill up a basket so we had plenty of food for weeks to come. What a treat! We laughed that we always had the best-stocked kitchen on campus--- my gosh what other college students actually had a spice cabinet and meat in the freezer?

Chris was intelligent and inquisitive, compassionate and confident - her style was classic and elegant. I am sad to have learned of her passing, I will always remember her with love and fondness.

May God bless her family and friends with peace and strength now and in the days to come.

Peace and love dear sister.
TLUSTH

Cory Parr

Cory Parr - January 25, 2020 at 08:30 PM



“ She always said hello to me when she came in the store that I will miss very much

John Borgen - January 25, 2020 at 04:51 PM



“ Prayerfully thinking of you Larry during this sad sad time of grief and loss your cousin Irene Cousino

Irene (VanBelle) Cousino - January 25, 2020 at 03:56 PM



“ Just hearing about Chris...we were Alpha Chi Omega sorority sisters and roommates a few times over our years at WMU. She was absolutely hilarious, open to fun and so very generous in every way toward others. I remember driving up to TC in her car for a weekend get-a-way from school listening to an Eddie Money tape (8 track) that we left on repeat almost the whole way! That was one of her favorites. She was a good friend for a lot of years. She will be close in my prayers.

Nancy Post Carstens

Nancy Post Carstens - January 25, 2020 at 03:44 PM



“ Larry, so sorry for you loss. Amy and Jeff Wheeler

Amy wheeler - January 25, 2020 at 01:54 PM



“ I am so sad to hear this news. Some of my best memories are of our times on the cheerleading squad in both junior and senior high school. I am very grateful for these memories. Keeping the family in our prayers.

Carolyn Whisman - January 25, 2020 at 11:55 AM



“ Sorry to hear this news Jane—all our best to you and your family!

My high school years were enjoyed by working at West Bay Toms for all those years from 8th grade to 11th! Thanks!!!

Cayce Weber - January 24, 2020 at 11:35 PM



“ My most heartfelt condolences to the family. Working at Toms with Christy was like working with family. She is missed.

Geri Sladek - January 24, 2020 at 11:35 PM



“ Larry, and Jane, my deepest condolences on the sudden loss of Christy. May you find peace in your memories.

Kristina Asam - January 24, 2020 at 10:36 PM



“ So glad we ran into you Matt and Jane tonight, you both have been in our minds and I. Our prayers. So very sorry for your loss. Dennis and Cindy Svec

dennis and cindy svec - January 24, 2020 at 09:33 PM



“ Jane, you and your sister were a team. Both of you hard workers. She will be missed.

Dorothy Dunville & Christy Haller

DOROTHY DUNVILLE - January 24, 2020 at 09:16 PM



“ Jane I am so sorry for your loss of Christy she was a wonderful person when she came into West Bay always stopped and talked to me and made me feel like she knew me forever I will never forget your family..God's Blessings to you Jane and your family JanHarr

Janet Harr - January 24, 2020 at 09:12 PM



“ Larry, Major prayers for you. A VERY giving person that will be missed.~Deborah Podolka

Deborah Podolka - January 24, 2020 at 07:08 PM



“ Larry.....oh, how I will miss this very special lady! My favorite memory will always be that beautiful face with the bubbly personality. I loved when she called you “Lar Bear”.... my thoughts & prayers are with you and your family. With sincere sympathy,
Sandi Liebrecht

sandi liebrecht - January 24, 2020 at 04:50 PM



“ Chris was the sweetest and most kind person I have known , a great loss for the community. My deepest condolences to Jane and the families. REST IN PEACE
CHRIS GOD BLESS YOU!

Kelly Taylor - January 24, 2020 at 04:43 PM



“ We have lost a beautiful and kind person in our community. Through Christy and the Deering family, many other families now enjoy the Children’s area of the new Interlochen Public Library. She will be missed by us all.
Renee Kelchak, Interlochen Public Library Director

Renee Kelchak - January 24, 2020 at 03:10 PM



“ My thoughts are with you all!! I was truly devastated to hear of Cristy's passing!! She was one of the nicest ladies I ever met!! I am so sorry love hugs thoughts and prayers to family friends and to all who crossed paths with this wonderful person....
She will be missed by all



Michelle Rigan - January 24, 2020 at 01:08 PM



“ I worked with Chris at NBD for many years. Sweet sweet person. I am in shock and saddened. My condolences to her family.

Lucinda Bogart - January 24, 2020 at 10:51 AM



“ Larry, Our sincere condolences for your loss and though we know words will not comfort you right now we wanted to tell you how sorry we are.

Troy and Molly Buttleman

Molly Buttleman - January 23, 2020 at 08:06 PM



“ I am so very sorry for your loss Larry and Jane. Christy was always kind, and always had a word of praise. Everyone loved her!
I will also miss her cute giggle.
I pray for some comfort for family...she truly will be missed!

Sue Reamer - January 23, 2020 at 04:01 PM



“ Larry, Jane & Matthew,
You all are in our prayer, Barb and I grieve with you in your time of loss.

With Love,
Ron and Barb Larson

Ron Larson - January 23, 2020 at 12:42 PM



“ Christine was kind and gentle and caring, she made everyone happy when she was around!! She always made me feel like family!! She made my life better because of her friendship!! She will be missed by all that knew her!! Prayers to her family!! She was truly a rose!!



Carrie Green - January 23, 2020 at 12:15 PM



“ Carrie Green sent a virtual gift in memory of Christine Ellen (Deering) Kuhnke



Carrie Green - January 23, 2020 at 12:08 PM



“ She was a kind and caring person! She always put others before herself! Whenever she came to Toms West Bay, she always made us feel like family!! She will be missed! Prayers to her wonderful family !!

Carrie Green - January 23, 2020 at 12:04 PM



“ Such a lovely lady. She and her family made possible the Children’s and Teen areas of the new Peninsula Community Library. She will be missed. Vicki Shurly, Peninsula Community Library Director.

Vicki Shurly - January 23, 2020 at 11:04 AM



“ It is very sad to hear this news! I loved working with Chris at Homestead Mortgage. She was a joy to work with and was a wonderful person! My condolences to Larry and to her whole family.

Tom Riedel - January 23, 2020 at 08:01 AM



“ Christy was such a wonderful lady. She was a regular where I worked and just a delight to take care of. Once I was having a horrible night and she reached in her purse and gave me a tube of mascara and said "Well horrible night or not atleast you can look pretty". I dont think I will ever put on my mascara without thinking of her again. My thoughts are with Larry and her family.



Michele Lapres - January 23, 2020 at 06:01 AM



“ I have many happy memories growing up on Buffy Hill with Chris and the gang in the circle with the Aunt Janes Pickle Wagon, playing till the street light came on. Chris and I were College roommates our Freshmen year at WMU we had many fun times. My heart is heavy that Chris is gone and my heart goes out to her wonderful family.
Kathy Campbell Strehl

Kathleen Strehl - January 22, 2020 at 07:23 PM



“ Larry, how very sorry and saddened I was to hear of Chris's passing. There are no words that will give you comfort, but Know that there are so many people who love you and are keeping you in their prayers. With love from your cousin, Vicki.

Vicki Hartkopf - January 22, 2020 at 04:24 PM



“ Our deepest condolences to Larry, Jane, Nancy, Carolyn and to my cousin Ann at this difficult time. Christy will always hold a special place in my heart. Her smile and laugh have etched a permanent place in my life. May her love for all of you live on through memories.

With comfort, peace and love, Beth (Werst) and Marty Gaynor

Beth (Werst) Gaynor - January 22, 2020 at 02:49 PM



“ So sorry for your loss Larry. Praying for you.



Debbie Vasquez - January 22, 2020 at 12:02 PM



“ So shocked and saddened to wake to this news today. Chris and I met while going through the breakups of our first marriages. We became fast friends and running partners for many years. I will never forget the time we spent together healing each other's hearts. Comfort and peace to family and friends who must carry on without the light she brought into our lives.

Sherry Carlson Schmalenberg - January 22, 2020 at 11:02 AM



“ So shocked and saddened to learn of Chris's passing. I will always remember how funny Chris was and her always laughing. May she now share some laughs with her father.

Lorri Wolf - January 22, 2020 at 10:39 AM



“ Please accept my sincere sympathy. The entire family, especially my dear cousin Ann and Christy's mom, are in my thoughts and prayers. With much love, Nancy Olson

Nancy Olson - January 22, 2020 at 09:37 AM



“ Words cannot express the sorrow of your loss. May wonderful memories help you get thru this difficult time. Keeping your entire family in our prayers.

Kurt and Kathy Schlemitz (Shanely)

Kathy Schlemitz - January 22, 2020 at 09:00 AM



“ Jane I am so sorry!! Wish I was there to give u a hug!!! And Larry as well! Christi was a wonderful person. Always smiling. She will be missed.

Donna Bembeneck - January 21, 2020 at 11:32 PM



“ Love to all of your family

Donna Bembeneck - January 21, 2020 at 11:33 PM



“ My condolences to all of Chris's family - I have known Christine for many years working on several fundraisers and went on several outings with her over the years. She had an infectious laugh. She was a beautiful person. So sorry for your loss and the community's loss. - Dianne Jurica

Dianne Jurica - January 22, 2020 at 03:53 PM



“ Larry, Ann, Jane, Nancy, Carolyn and Michelle- I am so very sorry for your loss of Christy on this earth. May our Lord and Savior comfort you and bring you His peace. Christy was my best friend beginning in 1st grade and had been a wonderful part of my life since then. Hundreds of warm memories-from sledding on the golf course to summers with sleepovers at the cottage, to nights at Grandma Deering's to days raking leaves at my Grandma's on 6th St. High School always began with the drive in Christy's Pinto and some evenings entertaining as Milliken Girls. Over the years we would meet up every summer and catch up by way of reviewing the lives of each sister. Her laughter came easy and was contagious. We always parted with so much left to talk about. I am so grateful for her being in my life. She will always be in my heart.

Nancy Lang - January 21, 2020 at 03:01 PM