



Joan Barbara Rifenbark

February 15, 1948 - January 2, 2019

Our beautiful mother, Joan Barbara (Atkinson) Rifenbark, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family at home on January 2, 2019. Joan was born in Traverse City, MI on February 15, 1948, the daughter of Wilmer & Margaret Atkinson. She graduated from TC Central in 1966. She married her husband, Gerald (Jerry) on September 23, 1972 and they spent 46 years devoted to one another.

A loving mother of three children, daughters, Sarah (Dan) Valbak of Ashburn, VA, Angela (Tom) Brown of Bear Lake, MI, and son, Gerald (Amanda) Rifenbark of Chicago, IL. She will be deeply missed by her four beautiful grandchildren, Olivia (16) & Chandler Valbak (13), Jake Brown (11) and Marley Rifenbark (1). Her fondest pastimes were spending quality time with her family. Joan is also survived by her eldest brother, Robert (Patricia) Atkinson of Maple City, MI and her youngest brother, Wilmer Atkinson of Syracuse, NY.

Joan's strong trust in God helped carry her through many difficult days as she battled cancer. Her faith was visible in the compassion she showed toward others. Anyone who knew her, knew that her family was everything to her. Joan absolutely loved her hometown, Traverse City. Her most cherished constant was spending each summer downtown during Cherry Festival with her family and closest friends. She had a deep appreciation for the beauty of the water and the cherished times spend during her childhood as well as continuing that legacy with her children and their children. She always welcomed them HOME and found the most joy in everyday that she was surrounded by loved ones. She wore the title "Mom" and "Grandma" with the utmost pride.

At her request, a private burial service will take place at Memorial Gardens Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Joan B Rifenbark can be made to Hospice of Michigan, 10850 E Traverse Hwy, Suite 1155, Traverse City, M 49684.

Cemetery

Grand Traverse Memorial Gardens

3575 Veterans Drive

Traverse City, MI, 49684

Comments



“ Please accept my family’s heartfelt condolences on the loss of your dear loved one Mrs. Rifenbark. May you find comfort in fond memories of her, and hope in God’s promise to restore those asleep in death to perfect life on a paradise Earth... ridding us of death forever.

Greene Family - January 14 at 01:07 PM



“ Joan, always welcoming and so easy to visit with. Am still trying to get past the shock of hearing she has passed. Will keep her and her family in my thoughts and prayers. Pardon my taking a partial quote from a memorial card for my mother but thought it appropriate, “God gives us comfort In the form of good friends, May his peace be with you, His love never ends.”

Judy Bellor Streich (Uncle Bob and Aunt Lourene)

Judy Streich - January 12 at 09:53 AM



“ I was thankful to have met Joan growing up with her children in Barton City. She was a very caring woman who will be missed.

June Maes - January 05 at 05:00 AM



“ I was lucky enough to have met this wonderful woman due to my friendship with her daughter Sarah. What a beautiful and extraordinary woman. I know how fiercely she loved and adored her family and I know that her love, devotion, strength, courage and grace will live on in this amazing family. Please know we are so terrible sorry for such a tremendous loss, we hope in time the pain will be replaced with beautiful memories of such a truly beautiful, strong and vibrant woman. Surrounding you with our love and prayers during this difficult time. We love you all. The Brooks Family, Carolyn, Eric, Alexandra and Brandon

Carolyn Brooks - January 04 at 03:52 PM



“ Her smile was warm,her heart was loving and made of gold! She was a proud woman, so caring so loving! I was lucky enough to spend some time with this incredible woman and family! Beautiful in many ways she was and will always be remembered for that! RIP Mrs Rifenbark!!!

Michael Gunderson - January 04 at 01:53 PM



“ I Never knew Anyone as Sweet and Kind as Joan. I know she will be missed! Another Angel

Terry Harbaugh -Wnuk - January 07 at 03:41 PM



“ I have a lot a good memories i remember the times we would all get together at her moms house and have a big meal she was there for me if i need some one to talk to she was in my wedding I love Joan and I will miss you Rip

Mary - January 04 at 10:06 AM



“ Our families had so many good times getting together. Lots of laughs and tears and memories made. Joan is such a beautiful person, inside and out, would do anything for anyone. so glad for social media so I could keep up with her and her busy family. You will be missed by many, but always remembered in a special way. Sending healing (((hugs))) for the family, for now, and all your days ahead. Love you Joan.

Pam (Bellor) Kirkpatrick - January 04 at 09:49 AM



“ I have so many fond and loving memories of this family!! Joan was a wonderful lady and will truly be missed. R.I.P. till we meet on the other side! To your family I am so sorry!! Love you all and God be with you during your difficult times.

Connie Hill - January 04 at 06:34 AM