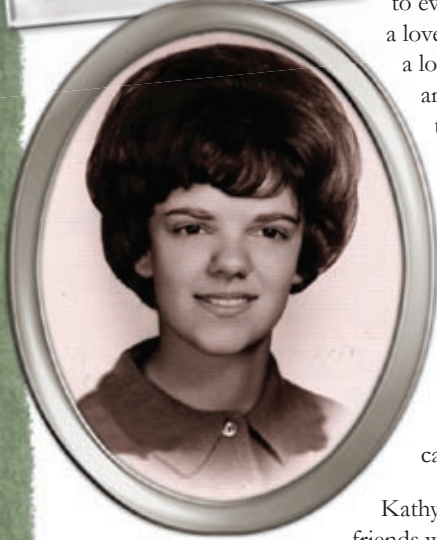


Kathy VanDyke



Kathy's Life Story



Kathleen Jane VanDyke was a woman with an unsinkable spirit, a lady who brought such joy to everyone she knew. Kathy was a lady with a love for life and the people around her, as a loving wife, mother, and grandmother, and a loyal friend to so many. More than anything, Kathy was a fun-loving, fabulous lady, whose life was a gift to all who knew her.



Kathy's story began on a hot summer day in 1946, as the students began to return to campus in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Those were good days in this country, which celebrated a victory in World War II, and began rebuilding a struggling economy. Kathy was born on August 15, 1946 joining her older siblings, Robert, MaryLee, and Carol ("The Big Kids"). Two years later, she welcomed her baby sister, Sally. (They were called the "The Little Kids").

Kathy grew up attending Kalamazoo Public Schools, where she made fast friends with two classmates named Angie and Angie. Her friendship with Angie Diver would be a lifelong one, as the two remained very close all of their lives.

Kathy was a beautiful young woman, who after graduation from high school found a good job at the Upjohn Company working in human resources for most of her career. It was a great company and a good place to work, and the place she would remain the rest of her career.

Kathy's personal life was much more rewarding, however. One night in 1970, Kathy went on a blind date with a young man named Richard VanDyke (yes, she went out with Dick VanDyke!). The sparks flew between the two that evening, and they quickly began dating steady and soon fell in love. The happy couple was married on June 11th, 1971, the beginning of a beautiful marriage and life together. With their marriage came the challenges and rewards of raising their two children, Amy and Steve.



Kathy was a wonderful wife and mother, who loved caring for her family more than anything. Even though she worked hard at Upjohn, she always put her family first, and that included making their house a true home. Whenever the family would move to a new house, Kathy delighted in putting her own artistic interior design skills to use, painting and remodeling the rooms to make them just right for her family. As her family attests, Kathy clearly had a gift. In her frequent use of the phrase "Dick, can do it" there wasn't much they didn't accomplish.



Kathy had many other gifts, which she bestowed on the people around her.

She was a wonderful baker and her homemade pies were pure magic. She learned to make her crust from scratch, carefully taught to her by her Grandma Locey, and a talent she in turn taught to her husband Dick, who proved an adept pupil. (Remember, “Dick, can do it”.)

Some things you just can’t teach, however, and Kathy

was simply a born shopper! She loved to travel, and her trips always revolved around the shopping found at her destination. She especially loved the little resort town of Charlevoix, with quaint, eclectic shops and galleries. Her son joked that Kathy was the only reason the town is still open!

Kathy eventually retired from Upjohn after 30 years with the company,

earning her some well-deserved free time. She and her beloved Dick enjoyed traveling, and made several trips out west. Their last trip out west was in the spring of 2008. A 4,000 mile journey visiting Texas, Arizona, California and Nevada (and doing some shopping, naturally).

In her earlier years, Kathy loved being on the move, and enjoyed walking and going to the YMCA to swim and play racquetball, ever the energetic, active and fun-loving lady she was.

Most of all, Kathy loved spending time with her family, particularly close to the holidays. She was “Santa to the World,” and Christmas was always a gala event at her home for the whole family. Kathy created family traditions which included a family breakfast on Christmas Eve morning and later that day a gathering of family and friends which included several hours of gift opening and Christmas cheer.

Kathy was also enormously proud and thrilled with her grandkids, and she was truly the ultimate Grandma. She always loved babies, and loved to dote on her grandkids, holding them and cuddling them. Her children and her grandchildren meant the world to her.



Kathy's life wasn't without its challenges, however. She was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of 40. She met this challenge with the courage and determination not to let it change her life. She remained very brave, and very active, for nearly the next two decades, until the disease slowly took hold of her health. In the mid-2000s, Kathy began needing to use a wheelchair, which was hard for someone so active to accept, but she never complained. Sadly, Kathy lost her brave battle with the disease on Monday, October 13, 2008. She was 62.

Kathy was a wonderful woman, as brave as she was beautiful, caring and compassionate, with a great love for life and the people in it. She was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother and friend, but most of all, Kathy was a gift to us, a gift we will cherish and remember forever. She will be so greatly missed.

Visit with Kathy's family on Sunday from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

at Life Story
Funeral Homes;
Portage,
5975 Lovers
Lane. Private

services will be held. Members of Kathy's family include her husband Dick, her daughter Amy VanDyke, her son Steve (Donna) VanDyke, her parents James & Mary (Locey) VanderRoest, her grandchildren Arielle, Alex Jr., Jake & Zac, her great grandson Saul, her siblings Robert (Cheryl) Ganzel, MaryLee (Douglas) Champagne, Carol (Anthony) Baccale, Sally (Jack) Dillon and many nieces, nephews and other relatives. Please visit Kathy's memory page at www.lifestorynet.com where you can share a memory or photo, sign her memory book or make a memorial donation to Family & Children Services or YWCA Domestic Assault Program.



Visit www.lifestorynet.com to connect with your friends and family, share stories, and sign the guestbook. Life Story Funeral Homes® are the exclusive providers of the Life Story Experience™.

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