



Darlene Eugene Berent

September 11, 1935 - December 24, 2020

Darlene Eugene (nee Smith) Berent, 85, of Highland Michigan, passed away Thursday, Dec 24, 2020, after battling complications from surgery. In his wisdom, Jesus welcomed her home, where she was reunited with her soulmate, John Berent, who preceded her in death 2 years ago.

Darlene was born September 11, 1935, in Winnipeg, Canada, and grew up in the Elmwood neighborhood of Winnipeg, where she was salutatorian of her Lord Selkirk High School senior class. She was quite athletic, and for a number of years held the provincial record in Manitoba for the 60 yard dash and softball throw. She won a 50% scholarship to attend University of Manitoba, but God had different plans.

At age 18 she moved to Chicago, Illinois, and worked as a secretary at the Lutheran Aid Society. It was there that she met John at a Chicago ballroom, when she was dating one of John's friends. But they were drawn together, beginning a 63 year journey of love, caring, and family. They were married April 28, 1956, and very quickly began their family of 3 boys and 1 girl in John's hometown of Detroit, soon moving to a new home in Madison Heights. Throughout her children's schooling, Darlene was actively involved in their lives; as a room mother, a volunteer, the loudest cheerleader at all sporting events, and pseudo-Mom to many of the neighborhood kids. She was a loving and generous Mom, who taught her kids that family always comes first, traditions are a wonderful legacy, and any adversity and sorrows can be faced with the support of family and friends.

Darlene was a force of nature, who raised four strong, independent children, each of whom sought their own path, guided by her powerful encouragement and example. It is because of Darlene that the family is so closely knit today. Family or friend, she greeted everyone with a smile, and created fabulous family meals and an endless array of homemade Christmas cookies. She loved hosting parties and events, and thrived in the role of Hostess.

Darlene was active in the General Federation of Women's Clubs, holding a variety of offices first at the Madison Heights Club, then at the State level, culminating in her role as GFWC Michigan State President from 1980-1982, and Convention Chair in 2012 and 2019. She was designated Michigan Woman of Achievement in 2005, GFWC Woman of the Year in 2011, and Jennie Award winner in 2016. She was also deeply involved in

Democrat politics, at the local, state, and national level. She attended the Democrat National Convention in 1992. Although primarily a stay-at-home Mom, once her kids were grown she worked for many years for the UAW at their Region 1 Headquarters.

An inveterate traveler, Darlene and John visited over 80 countries, and spent time on all 7 continents. Darlene also set a wonderful example with her charitable involvement.

Girlstown, Gateway Counseling Center, The Kasey Foundation, the Lutheran Church, John Dewan Foundation, as well as the general GFWC charities, all benefitted from her leadership. For several decades she would don an Easter Bunny suit and visit senior citizen centers and children's hospital wards, passing out candy and treats, and bringing a smile to those in need.

In addition to her husband, Darlene was preceded in death by her mother, Lillian; father, Edward; sister, Florence Pietracci; and granddaughter, Kasey. She is survived by a brother, Sid Smith (Sharon), a sister, Frances Adolph; 3 sons, Daniel (Barbara), Bryan (Allison), Matt (Cathy), and daughter Sandra; and grandchildren, Stephanie Studt (Daniel), Christopher Berent, Brookelle Gragg, Nicholas Berent, Travis Gragg, Erica Berent, Cassidy Gragg, Mason Clark (Michelle), and Leah Schulenburg (Matthew); great-grandchildren Liliana Schulenburg, Solomon Schulenburg, Eleanor Clark and Harrison Clark, and numerous loving relatives and friends. An opportunity to pay last respects, immediately followed by a funeral service and celebration of life will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020, at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 2040 S. Commerce Road, Walled Lake. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Kasey Berent Foundation, 8 Buxton Road, West Middlesex, PA 16159.

Events

DEC **Funeral Service** 11:00AM

30

St. Matthew Lutheran Church

2040 S Commerce Road, Walled Lake, MI, US, 48390

Comments



“ I’ve known Darlene all of my life. There was no finer woman on Earth. She was my second mom and had a great influence on my life. I was always welcome in her and John’s home. Dan and Bryan I consider brothers. Darlene will be missed but she is reunited with John and no longer has to live a life compromised. I’m heartbroken that I could not attend her funeral to pay my last respects and show support for the entire Berent family. For this I’m truly sorry. Prayers for you all ...

Dale Schweizer - January 04, 2021 at 05:52 PM



“ I have loved Darlene and John for over 50 years. She has always been one of my favorite people. Her love and support always seemed to come from inside and was genuine. I can't tell you how much my memories of this lady have comforted me in my life and over the years. I got to see her and John several times on my return trips back to Michigan to visit. Even though it may have been several years since we last saw each other, it was always like we just saw each other last night. She will be dearly missed, but never forgotten.

Gary Geraldts - December 31, 2020 at 02:59 PM



“ Darlene met through GFWC MI and became close friends. She and John often welcomed me and other members friends into their home and shared all things. often we were up till late in the morning hours just discussing life.
Darlene pushed me and helped me to grow into myself the person I am today. Even though we did not live close we often talked. She showed me some of the ropes so to speak.
Love to all family She loved each of you in a special way children and grandchildren alike
I will continue to be greatfull she called me friend.
Joyce Iltis GFWC Big Rapids inc.

Joyce Iltis - December 31, 2020 at 07:38 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Mrs. Berent Service



O'Brien-Sullivan Funeral Home - December 30, 2020 at 05:30 PM



“ Thank you Berent family for sharing this video with all of us who could not attend. Darlene was such a special woman, and inspiration and friend. It goes beyond words how much she will be missed. Star Curley

Star Curley - December 30, 2020 at 09:38 PM



“ Darlene was a great friend and mentor. Many great memories of working with her over the years. She will be missed.

Eva Joyce Burns - December 30, 2020 at 12:22 PM



“ I'll never forget the Easter Bunny. Anytime I see someone in costume it brings back memories of times visiting Michigan. Aunt Darlene...ill miss you. Prayers are being sent to my cousins and their families.

TERESA GIL - December 30, 2020 at 09:05 AM



“ Deepest sympathy to The Berent Family. May God enfold you in His love, peace fill your hearts, words and friendships comfort you and cherished memories all help to ease your sorrow.

Sheila Hebner, Millington, MI - December 29, 2020 at 01:00 PM



“ Darlene was our neighbor and friend. She and John coached our son Dillon's T ball. Dillon and Travis played LTU hockey and Darlene and John were big fans. Darlene made Christmas cookies that John delivered to our home. We will miss them both. Sending sympathy, prayers and peace. Love The Tierney Family

Debra Tierney - December 29, 2020 at 10:51 AM