



## Barbara J. Merrill

September 17, 1948 - May 3, 2017

Barbara J. Merrill, 68, of Benton Harbor died Wednesday, May 3, 2017 at the Lakeland Regional Medical Center in St. Joseph.

A private family service celebrating her life will be held at 4 PM on Sunday, May 7, at the Fairplain Chapel of Florin Funeral Service in Benton Harbor. Cremation has taken place. Memorials may be made to the Paws of Hope Organization at [www.paws-of-hope.com](http://www.paws-of-hope.com). Please share memories, messages or photos at [www.florin.net](http://www.florin.net).

Barb was born on Sept 17, 1948 in St. Joseph to Ed and Adeline Merrill. She graduated from St. John's Catholic High School in 1966. Barb was employed at the Sheriff Dept for 12 years before retiring in 1999. She was an active volunteer at the Humane Society and also with the Save A Stray Program. Barb loved to read, play games and work with animals. She was a fun loving individual who enjoyed giving to others. Barb also loved and cared for her family and was a spirit to the end.

Her family includes her sister, Debra (Terry) Vandenberg of Eau Claire, her nephew, Kyle (Stephannie) Vandenberg of St. Joseph, her niece, Kellie (Justin) Damaske of St. Joseph, her great nephew, Zane Damaske, and her numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins in Minnesota. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers, Doug in 1993 and Rease in 2017.



# Previous Events

## Family Service

MAY 7. 4:00 PM (ET)

Fairplain Chapel of Florin Funeral Service  
1053 East Napier Avenue  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022  
(269) 926-7222  
staff@florin.net

# Tribute Wall

DS

“ *Barb Merrill's passing leaves a very large hole in the lives of so many people she touched over the years. She was one of the most unselfish, caring and thoughtful people I have ever known.*

*When she worked in the county jail and I was a consultant there, she would meet me at the jail door so many times to give me a "heads up" that there was a deputy who might need to talk with me. She cared so much about her co-workers and her family and her neighbors and cats that she didn't leave much time to worry about herself. Her years of failing health did not decrease her thoughtfulness for others, and her niece and nephew and grandnephew were the jewels of her life.*

*Thank you, Barb, for worrying about all of us. Rest in peace, you very special friend.*

*Dr. Stan Showalter*

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**Dr. Stan Showalter** - May 06, 2017 at 07:56 AM

CG

“ *Barb was such a sweet and genuine person .. we shared a few laughs and memories last time I saw her. She loved Jesus with her whole heart and it is without a doubt that she lives beyond the rainbow in the sky in her castle on the street of gold. Barb was the kind of soul who, after spending time with her, made you feel even better about that greater meaning of life. She knew how to touch your heart and she treated you like you were special, not only to her but to our loving God. She will be missed - wish I had spent more time with her. Prayers for the family and many other friends she leaves behind. Hope I can be an example of the kind of person she was while on this earth.*

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**cheryl glowacki** - May 06, 2017 at 04:36 AM

TD

“ Barb, what an honor to be able to call you my friend. We were lucky to have you in our lives and I am so happy that you were able to be part of the weddings, birthdays and holidays with our family. I will never forget the first time Amy brought you over and the look on our faces when we figured out that you were our neighbor as well in the early 80's, and then you became Amy's neighbor. Thanks you for the laughs and the friendship. You will be missed dearly. I know you are at peace now and I am sure you are running with all the animals.

Tonda

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**Tonda DeSenzio** - May 05, 2017 at 03:14 PM

AM

“ Barb you know how I felt about you. You were truly apart of my family, you watched my nieces and nephews grow up, came to family functions, weddings, birthdays and holidays, and fit in so well with all of us goofy people. I will never forget our friendship and how much you cared about others and furry friends. I wish I could have been there for you in the end. Anyone that knew you is a better person for it. You touched so many lives human and animal. I will miss talking to you everyday, I will miss your sense of humor but I will never forget all the things we did together. RIP my friend until we meet again.

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**Amy** - May 05, 2017 at 09:51 AM