



Margaret Louise Balyeat

July 26, 1949 - April 28, 2014

OBITUARY

Margaret Louise (Craven) Balyeat, 64, went home to rest in the arms of her Saviour on April 28, 2014 at home following a long illness

Margaret was one of four daughters born to the union of Edward S. and Jeannette (Proudfit) Balyeat. She was born on July 26, 1949 in South Bend, Indiana, and was raised in Osceola, Indiana until the family relocated to St. Joseph in 1961. A 1967 graduate of St. Joseph High School, Margaret attended Lake Michigan College before going on to earn bachelor's degrees in music and education from Western Michigan University in 1971. While a student at Western, Margaret was active in the Wesley Foundation's Methodist Campus ministry, singing in the foundation's choir and serving as the organization's president in 1970 and active in the Alpha Pi chapter of the Kappa Phi service sorority.

She returned to the area to teach in Benton Harbor Area Schools in 1971, where she remained until suffering a disabling stroke in September of 2002. During her thirty-one year career, Margaret was thrice profiled in Who's Who In America's Teachers and was named one of the districts' outstanding educators on two separate occasions. She was also recognized by the Honorable U. S. Judge Douglas Hillman in 1982, citing her contributions to the districts' desegregation plan for her work in helping plan and implement the districts' Creative Arts Academy, one of four magnet schools mandated by the court's order.

Margaret was united in marriage to Gene K. Craven of Benton Harbor in 1984 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The marriage was dissolved by divorce in 1991. No children were born to this union.

Margaret was baptized into the East Empire Church of Christ in 1982 after accepting and acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as her personal Savior.

She is survived by one son, Ryan H. (Meredith) Sherrod of Kalamazoo one step-son, Kiritan Craven of Benton Harbor, three sisters, Kathleen (Gary) Wells of Kentwood, MI, Janet Tower and David Tower of Delton, MI, Janice Balyeat- Hansen (Eric) of Shelbyville, MI, close cousin Patricia A. Stutsman of Elkhart, Indiana, special grand-niece and namesake Lilliana Margaret Tower, special friends Jennifer C. Willis and Sandra Grays of Benton Harbor, and several nieces and nephews as well as seven additional great-nieces and nephews. She also leaves to mourn many foster grandchildren in the Benton Harbor area and a host of other relatives, colleagues and friends. She was preceded in death by both parents.

Margaret was active in the planning and execution of the Benton Harbor Children's Art Fair and provided a tutoring service for elementary students in her home during the last years of her life

The family will receive friends from 5:00-8:00 Thursday, May 1 at the Fairplain Chapel, Florin Funeral Service. The funeral is scheduled to take place at the Fairplain Chapel on Friday, May 2, at 1:00.

A scholarship fund for Benton Harbor area students is in the process of being established in Margaret's name. Checks to the Margaret Balyeat Scholarship Fund will be accepted by mail or at the funeral home.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 1. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

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

Service

MAY 2 (ET)

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1053 East Napier Avenue
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Tribute Wall

DE

“ To the family of Margaret,
She and I were friends all through grade school and high school. Know that she will be missed by many. I have enjoyed reconnecting with her on Face Book and will dearly miss her posts.



God has her now, in His hands, and will keep her safe from all harm. I will remember all our fun times together growing into adults and learning about the world around us.

Rest in peace, my dear, sweet friend. We'll all miss you, Margaret...much love from a friend.

Yours in Christ,

Debbie Dennison

Debbie - May 01, 2014 at 11:40 AM

DE

“ Debbie sent a virtual gift in memory of Margaret Louise Balyeat



Debbie - May 01, 2014 at 11:38 AM

CC

“ Auntie you will be missed dearly, you were a great inspiration in my life and you have always been there. I love you and I thank you fo loving and caring for me. Love always your niece Carlita Craven RIH!! Give my mom a very big hug for me!

Carlita Craven - May 01, 2014 at 06:12 AM

CC

“ Carlita Craven lit a candle in memory of Margaret Louise Balyeat



Carlita Craven - May 01, 2014 at 06:08 AM

GL

“ Gloria (Nelli) Lloyd purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Margaret Louise Balyeat.



Gloria (Nelli) Lloyd - April 30, 2014 at 11:47 PM

C(

“ Carlotta Kennedy (Niece) purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Margaret Louise Balyeat.



Carlotta Kennedy (Niece) - April 30, 2014 at 11:35 PM

CK

“ Margaret Louise Balyeat is my Aunt & she was also a mother to me. I thank God for her light, spirit & gift of teaching. Without her being placed in my life at a key point in time; I wouldn't have made it to were I am today nor would I be the young woman I am today. Thank you Auntie/Mom for all your love, support & prayers. I now have you as my guardian angel. I love you & your forever with me in my heart. (Your Niece/Daughter - Carlotta Kennedy)



Carlotta Kennedy - April 30, 2014 at 11:29 PM

TH

“ I went to High School with Margaret...I always liked her and her bubbly personality...her smile was beautiful and endearing...I hadn't seen her but we reconnected on Facebook. I was so sad to hear today that she had passed away...she was way too young.



I knew a little girl from Benton Harbor who had Margaret as a teacher and liked her so much...she said she was her favorite teacher. I am sure she was excellent and by the comments on facebook...she was very much loved.
Tammy Hatch

Tammy Hatch - April 30, 2014 at 08:50 PM



“ *Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Margaret Louise Balyeat.*



April 30, 2014 at 04:56 PM



“ *Margaret - so genuine, intelligent and loyal, I will miss you, Judy*

J Jones - April 30, 2014 at 12:48 PM