



Kathryn May Pankratz, cherished wife, devoted mother, and adored grandmother, peacefully passed away at the age of 75 on October 25, 2023, in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Kathryn "Kathy" May was born on November 24, 1947, in Springfield, Oregon to Martin Haag and Christine Haag (Samek). Her parents had moved the family to Oregon to pursue treatment for Martin's rheumatoid arthritis. Soon after, Kathryn was born at home with Grandma Mary Samek as midwife. The Haags returned home to North Dakota with baby Kathy next to them in the front of the grain truck, while the siblings rode in the bed of the grain truck under the tarp. Kathy went on to attend St. Wenceslaus Elementary School and was considered to be a rock of Trinity High School's first graduating class in 1965.

Kathy enjoyed being part of the dance team at Trinity. She participated in city league volleyball and bowling and loved making new friends. She attended beautician school in St. Cloud, MN and was always happy cutting hair for friends and family members.

Kathy met the love of her life, Henry "Hank" Pankratz. Their fondness for each other grew into a lifelong partnership, and on June 2, 1967, they exchanged vows at St. Wenceslaus Church, Dickinson. Kathy and Hank adopted Tyler Martin and brought him home when he was five weeks old from Fargo in November 1974. They were again blessed with a second son, as Kathy gave birth to Lee Michael, who arrived in May, 1981.

She started working at the very young age of 13. Her first job was at Lee's Truckstop where she worked alongside her mother who was a cook. In 1966, Kathy started working for Bell Telephone as a switchboard operator before moving into many other positions, including a forklift operator. Throughout her life she had 17 different job titles, yes, she counted all of them. Kathy said there was never a dull moment in her first stretch at Bell which ended in 1986 due to layoffs. Kathy moved on to become a bank teller at American State Bank before becoming an optician for Western Eye Clinic. Her proudest professional achievement came when Quest, formerly known as Bell Telephone, rehired her in 2000, bridging her prior service and therefore acknowledging her years of hard work. Kathy happily retired in 2008 from Qwest where she made many, many lifelong friends. She was forever grateful to those who encouraged her to return for another stretch of employment.

Kathy thrived in the sun and around the water. She, Hank, and the kids enjoyed adventures in their pickup camper, motorhome, and travel trailer before purchasing a lake cabin at Mosset Bay on Lake Sakakawea. Countless weekends were spent fishing, boating, skiing,



tubing and playing cards at Mosset Bay. Many memories were forged with family and friends in their backyard swimming pool at their 8th Avenue home in Dickinson.

On top of her own career, she worked selflessly to feed her growing boys and busy husband all while maintaining a well-kept home. She will always be remembered for the abundance of delicious meals and treats provided on a weekly basis. Large family meals were always a part of family holiday gatherings and Kathy was always a big contributor. Before the kids ran wild and the card games commenced, large dishes of turkey, ham, potatoes and countless salads and dressings were enjoyed and devoured. Even when not hosting, there were many empty trays of food to bring home from Grandma Haag's, Uncle Dick's or the Diebel's and Weilers'. Being a devoted sports mom and the wife of a coach, Kathy could always be found in the bleachers, cheering with unbridled enthusiasm during her sons' competitions. Her unwavering support extended to Hank's coaching endeavors, where she devoted countless hours of traveling, cheering, and socializing on sports trips. Kathy valued the many lifelong friendships she gained through Tyler's and Lee's sports, as well as those she met through Hank's coaching career. The stories are endless.

Kathy fought a successful battle with breast cancer in 1994 and 1995, undergoing intense chemotherapy and driving to Bismarck and back every morning before work for radiation treatments. She defied the odds, surpassing her prognosis while thriving and celebrating an additional 29 years, of which we are all so grateful.



Kathy graciously offered wisdom, strength and mentorship to dozens of friends, co-workers and community members who were fighting similar battles with cancer. To this day, we are still hearing names of those she spent time comforting and her family is swelled with pride when reminded of her generosity, bravery, and kindness.

Kathy and Hank's golden years officially began when grandson Grayson Lee was born to Lee and Megan in September 2013. The enrichment continued with the arrival of Elliot Madelyn in August 2015. All parties landed in Bismarck and since 2014 have only lived a few city blocks apart.



Grandma Kathy was honored and thrilled to have the roles of personal chef, stylist, caretaker and chauffeur added to her resume. Chocolate chip cookies, caramel rolls, chocolate cakes, pies and pancakes were delivered frequently and met with great enthusiasm. "My grandchildren Grayson and Elliot were my pride and joy and my heart would melt when they would butter me up to make their favorite caramel rolls or chocolate chip cookies."

Kathy happily assisted her son in caretaking duties of her grandbabies while her daughter-in-law delivered precious babies into this world bringing joy to families throughout North Dakota. The last few years of Kathy's life was rich with love from family and friends. Snow-birding in California and Arizona, summertime boating, barbecuing and relaxing at Lee and Megan's cabin at Strawberry Lake.

In August of 2022, she received disheartening news of cancer's return. Although she had sworn off any more chemotherapy over the years, she began treatments promptly, determined to keep fighting to continue life with her family. Her mind and soul were determined to fight, but her body had taken a toll, and the aggressive nature of her illness proved overwhelming. Her kind heart and beautiful smile will never be forgotten.

She was a member of Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Dickinson and Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Bismarck.



Kathryn May Pankratz is survived by her loving husband, Hank; her devoted son, Tyler; her cherished son and daughter-in-law, Lee and Megan, and their children, Grayson and Elliot, all of Bismarck. She also leaves behind her caring brother, Dave Haag, and his wife Arlene of Eugene, Oregon, as well as her brother-in-law, Jim Pankratz of Forest Lake, Minnesota, and Hank's extended Diebel family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Martin and Christine Haag; her siblings, Richard "Dick" Haag, Raymond Haag, and her sister, Shirley Hilgendorf.

ORDER OF SERVICE

In Loving Memory of

Kathryn May Pankratz

November 24, 1947 ~ October 25, 2023

Vigil Service

Wednesday, November 1, 2023 ▪ 7:00 PM

Parkway Funeral Service ▪ 2330 Tyler Parkway ▪ Bismarck, North Dakota

Mass of Christian Burial

Thursday, November 2, 2023 ▪ 10:00 AM

Church of Corpus Christi ▪ 1919 N. 2nd St. ▪ Bismarck, North Dakota

Interment

Thursday, November 2, 2023 ▪ 3:00 PM

North Dakota Veterans Cemetery ▪ Mandan, North Dakota

Scripture Readings

Old Testament Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 25-28, 30-31

Responsorial Psalm 25 "To you, O Lord, I lift my soul"

New testament St. Paul to Philipians 4:4-9

Gospel John 5:24-29

Music

Prelude "Hail Mary, Gentle Woman"

"Well Done"

Opening "Be Not Afraid"

Offertory "On Eagle's Wings"

Communion "We Remember"

Special Song "Ave Marie"

Final Commendation "Song of Farewell"

Closing Song "Amazing Grace"

Celebrant Msgr. Patrick Schumacher

Burial Presider Deacon Bob Wingenbach

Musicians Sebastian Haboczki & Colleen Reinhardt

Readers Cora Buchholz and Megan Pankratz

Following the Mass, the family invites you to join them at the church for lunch and fellowship.



Letting Go

*The angels gathered near your bed
So very close to you
For they knew the pain and suffering
That you were going through*

*I thought about so many things
As I held tightly to your hand
Oh, how I wished that you were strong
And happy once again*

*But your eyes were looking homeward
To the place beyond the sky
Where Jesus held His outstretched arms
It was time to say "goodbye"*

*I struggled with my selfish thoughts
For I wanted you to stay
So we could walk and talk again
Like we did – just yesterday*

*But Jesus knew the answer
And I knew He loved you so
So I gave to you life's greatest gift
The gift of letting go*

*Now my heart will carry memories
Of the love you gave to me
Until we meet again in Heaven
Where the best is yet to be*



Tribute Video



IN LOVING MEMORY

Kathryn Pankratz

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