

Colette Anne Illies was born on October 28, 1935, in Greenwald, Minnesota. Colette was the daughter of Herman and Elizabeth Lensing, attended St. Andrews Grade School, and graduated from Melrose High School in 1953. Graduating as a Registered Nurse in 1956 from St. Francis School of Nursing in La Crosse, Wisconsin, she went on to work at St. Francis Hospital in La Crosse, Sauk Centre Hospital, Rice Memorial Hospital, private duty nurse, Paynesville Hospital, Glen Oaks Care Center, and finished her 40-year nursing career in 1998 at the Willmar Regional Treatment Center, where she served for 19 years.

On October 13, 1958, Colette was united in marriage to James "Jim" Illies and raised five children in their home on the shores of Green Lake. Their home was host to many family reunions, parties with friends, fishing from the dock (sometimes even legally), and sunbathing on the gentle waves of the crystal-clear water. Colette enjoyed doing handwork, especially hardanger, cross-stitch, and embroidery, and could often be found canning, playing card games, making candies, visiting casinos, and traveling across the United States with Jim. Colette will be remembered by many for her homemade pies and German potato salad.

Colette was a member of Our Lady of the Lakes church in Spicer and, when wintering down south, a member of Our Lady of Guadalupe church in Mission, Texas. She served as a religion teacher, officer of ladies' guild, Sacristan, Eucharist minister, parish nurse, and parish custodian. She also volunteered at Rice Hospice, Our Lady of the Lakes church, Bentson Park in Texas, and belonged to the Tuesday Quilters group. In 2002, Colette started a widow persons group called Mattie's Gals.

She is survived by five children: Jeff (and Beth) Illies of Spicer, MN; Gary (and Renae) Illies of Sauk Centre, MN; Michelle (and Randy) Norris of Spicer, MN; Joy Woelfel of New London, MN; Jan (and David) Ellis of Colorado Springs, CO; Twelve grandchildren: Coty, Casey (and Monica), and Bret (and Debbie) Illies; Joshua and Ethan Illies; Trista (and Brodie) Raymond and Erika (and Derek) Lieser; Logan Woelfel; Hunter Fernelius and Jade, Addison (and Alisha), and Aiden (and Brianna) Ellis; Fourteen great-grandchildren: Lainey and Lucy Illies; Sophia and Wyatt Illies; Brooks and Rory Lieser; Téó, Beckett, Nova, and Ronan Ellis; Emma, Caleb, Evelyn, and Lucas Ellis; sister-in-law, Lois (Phil) Williams; Brother-in-law Al Beste; besides other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Jim, in 2000; a grandson, Tyler Woelfel, in 2021; her parents; four sisters: Louise, Anna, Evelyn, and Rosella; six brothers: Marvin, Frank, Herman, Arthur, John, and Cletus.

## *Celebrating the Life of*



*Colette A. Illies*

*1935 - 2024*



## GREEN LAKE REUNION

We headed out to uncle Jim's and  
aunt Colette,  
Usually a beautiful day to run  
to the lake and get wet.

Where memories were made in  
the Lensing clan,  
Parents relaxed and visited  
as children screamed and ran.

Petermeier and Illies would raise the bar,  
Leaving nieces and nephews behind, out in the lake so far.

The lake was great and filled with pleasure,  
But when the food came out that was another treasurer.

Always great to remember the uncles and aunts we saw,  
But a real treat to see and greet clan's matriarch,  
OUR GRANDMA.

As years went by it truly became a clan,  
The event so well managed without a restrictive plan.

We've all grown up, made plans and moved on,  
I long for those simple days that appear gone.

Our world, in troubled times, needs a place to just get wet,  
Relax and refresh at a place like uncle Jim's and aunt Colette.

This whole clan owes a huge THANKS to today's matriarch,  
AUNT COLETTE.

Thanks, Bob Woeste

In Loving Memory Of

## Colette Anne Illies

October 28, 1935  
Greenwald, Minnesota

May 14, 2024  
Watkins, Minnesota

### Mass of Christian Burial

Tuesday, May 21, 2024 - 10:30 a.m.  
Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church  
Spicer, Minnesota

### Celebrant

Fr. Steve Verhelst

### Music

Accompanist: Mary Pieh  
Vocalists: Mary Ann Lucken John & Yvonne Beste

Prelude: Whispering Hope (CD)  
Gathering Song: On Eagles Wings  
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 27 – The Lord Is My Light  
Preparation of the Gifts: Ave Maria  
Communion: Hail Mary, Gentle Woman  
Post Communion: Scars in Heaven (CD)  
Going Forth: God Bless America

### Gift Bearers - Granddaughters

Trista Raymond Erika Lieser Jade Ellis

### Casketbearers - Grandsons

Coty Illies Casey Illies Bret Illies Joshua Illies  
Ethan Illies Hunter Fernelius Logan Woelfel

### Interment

St. Louis Catholic Cemetery  
Paynesville, Minnesota