



## Danna P. Laliberte

March 25, 1941 - February 1, 2026

Danna Patrica Laliberte, age 84, passed away at 10:26 a.m. on February 1, 2026, in the warmth of her own home, surrounded by loved ones and her fuzzy pet companions. Her final moments reflected the same love, gentleness, and resilience that defined her entire life. A private family Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Caring for Danna and her family is the LeMieur Funeral Home in Swanville, MN.

Danna was born on March 25, 1941, in Indianapolis, IN, to John Drewry and Elizabeth Crandall. She grew up alongside her brother, Joseph, and spent her childhood dancing, caring for her beloved Dalmatian, and later moving with her family to Atlanta, Georgia. Even as a young girl, she radiated kindness, curiosity, and a natural inclination to help others. Danna graduated from Northside High School in 1959, proudly part of the spirited class whose motto was “Raising hell and feeling fine – class of ’59.” She went on to attend Florida State University, majoring in special education—a field that perfectly matched her gift for compassion. During her time at FSU, she joined a popular sorority and often shared lively stories of sorority life, including sleeping in the “sleeping porch” with five or six other women. Her education paused when she welcomed her first child, Christopher, in 1963. But Danna’s determination never wavered. In her 40s, she returned to school and earned her Special Education degree from St. Cloud State University in 1985, with her children proudly cheering her on. She later earned her social work license, further

expanding her ability to serve others. Danna's career was as unique and vibrant as she was. Before moving to Minnesota, she lived in Mesa, Arizona, where she managed a goat farm, and became known for her leadership and expertise. Her talent with animals led her to Minnesota, where she was recruited to run a dairy goat operation in Burtrum. Her professional life then shifted toward human services, where her heart truly thrived. She worked as a job coach with Rural Minnesota CEP, helping individuals find employment and pursue education. She later became a beloved Special Education teacher in the Swanville School District, profoundly impacting the lives of her students—one of whom stayed in touch with her for years, crediting her with changing his life. Danna also worked at the Todd County DAC, supporting individuals with special needs in job placement, and later served as a guardian for people with disabilities through Todd County. She continued working until her cancer diagnosis in 2021, a testament to her selflessness and unwavering dedication to others. Danna lived a full and deeply connected life.

She married her high school sweetheart, Matthew Welch and had four children—Christopher, Geoff, Fritz, and Gretchen. Later, she married Larry Laliberte and welcomed her youngest son, Joseph. She also shared many adventures and travels with Fred, exploring the world with joy and curiosity. She was the proud matriarch of a large and loving family. Her children brought 17 grandchildren into her life: Olivia, Christina, Gillian, Colin, Elise, Sophia, Avarielle, Nanook, Ursula, Gabriel, Solomon, Samuel, Gianna, Julia, Lucia, Emma, and Ariana. She was also blessed with nine great-grandchildren, whom she adored. Her passions were as wide-ranging as her heart: goats, birds, cats, reading, weaving on her loom, farming, and especially her grandchildren. She was a certified dairy goat judge and an avid cross-country skier, continuing to ski well into her later years. She kept up with every grandchild's sports, careers, and milestones. They knew that no matter what, Grandma Danna was cheering for them.

Danna was goofy, musical, and endlessly positive. She loved funny songs, cottage cheese, her dog, Piper, and bringing joy into any room she entered. Even in pain, she smiled. Helping people wasn't just something she did—it was who she was. Danna's legacy is one of love, resilience, and service. She changed lives—students, clients, friends, and family alike. Her positivity was so powerful that even nurses who cared for her during her 31 rounds of chemotherapy described her as a bright, uplifting presence. She once attended a basketball game the same day she received chemotherapy, determined to live fully with whatever time she had left.

Her sayings will echo forever in the hearts of those who loved her: "I LOVE DANDELIONS." "FOR CRYING IN THE NIGHT." "SUPER." And the words she had tattooed on her arm after she broke her hip: "No pain, no gain." She was, without question, one of the toughest women anyone could ever meet.

She is survived by children, Christopher (Teresa) Welch of Dallas, GA, Geoffry (Brandi) Welch of Sauk Rapids, MN, Fritz (Rachel) Welch of Glasgow, Scotland, Gretchen (Tom Podraza) Welch of Little Falls, MN and Joseph Laliberte of Upsala, MN; brother, Joseph (Sharon) Drewry of Atlanta, GA; 17 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

Danna was preceded in death by parents, John and Elizabeth Drewry.

The family extends heartfelt gratitude to all caregivers, nurses, and medical staff who supported Danna throughout her five-year battle with cancer. Their compassion made her journey gentler.

# Tribute Wall

DV

“ One of the sweetest kindest people I’ve ever met. ❤️🌈

David Valesano - February 06 at 11:32 AM

HP

“ I admired Danna for her intelligent mind, her kind heart ❤️, and her incredible strength in the face of hardship. She had a deep love and was so proud of her children....always encouraging them to explore their interests. Cheering them along as they went. She never backed down from a struggle as a woman or single mom. She has earned a special place in Heaven because she fought so hard to get there. Rest in peace Danna. 🙏

Helen Pfeffer - February 04 at 08:55 PM

RO

What a women!! I was blessed to be part of her journey, caring for you Dana was a pleasure, you truly are a inspiration to me and to others who watched you fight the fight. I will never forget your smile, your kindness, compassion and Love for your family. Gretchen you deserve Daughter of the century. Beautiful moms raise beautiful daughters go now Dana and rest in peace God bless you all.

RoseAnn - February 05 at 12:27 AM

BB

“ Sending prayers to the family sorry for your loss



Brenda Baum - February 04 at 12:46 PM

KG

“ Kathryn Gessell lit a candle in memory of  
Danna P. Laliberte



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**Kathryn Gessell** - February 03 at 04:15 PM

DJ

“ Sincere sympathy to Danna’s family.



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**Debbie Jelinski-Harakel** - February 03 at 01:57 PM

AD

“ Ann Doble sent a virtual gift in memory of  
Danna P. Laliberte



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**Ann Doble** - February 03 at 07:35 AM