



Joyce W. Nikolai

November 7, 1932 - March 30, 2024

Joyce W. Nikolai, 91 year old resident of Little Falls, MN, passed away Saturday, March 30, 2024, surrounded by her children and grandchildren at the St. Cloud Hospital in St. Cloud, MN. Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Little Falls, MN, at 11:30 A.M. Visitation will be held on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, from 4:00-7:00 P.M., at the Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, and again on Thursday one hour prior to the service at the church. Christian Mothers will pray the rosary at 3:30 on Wednesday, at the Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls. Burial will take place in Calvary Cemetery. In Lieu of Flowers, memorials are preferred to St. Mary's Catholic Church or the St. Francis Convent. Caring for Joyce and her family is the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Little Falls.

Joyce was born November 7, 1932 to Philip and Leila (Gravis) Wright of San Diego, TX. In 1946, at the age of 13, Joyce left her hometown and went to Incarnate Word, an Irish Catholic boarding school in San Antonio, TX. She spent the next 9 years there in high school and college where she earned a BA in English Literature and a teaching certificate. She considered the nuns and her life-long friends from Incarnate Word to be her family and credits them for shaping her strong faith. While living in San Antonio, she agreed to a blind date with Lee Nikolai, set up by mutual friends. They fell in love and were married on December 30, 1958. Together they faced the challenges and adventures that came with moves across the country that included medical

school in TX and residency in MN at Mayo Clinic. They finally settled down in Little Falls in 1973.

Joyce immersed herself in being a mother and a volunteer. She spent countless hours volunteering as a member of Christian Mothers, St. Gabriel's Hospital Auxiliary, and both St. Mary's Church and School which all of her children attended. Later in life, she was an English as a second language tutor. Joyce created an annual family tradition celebrating the "Nikolympics" at Maddens for the last 27 years. This special family time brought the whole family closer together. She was a grandma to 11 grandkids, and a great-grandma to 1 great-grandchild and was famous for her sweet rolls and pecan pie.

Joyce is survived by her children, Eric (Carrie) Nikolai, Lisa (Craig) Meschke, Karen (Jim Laurence) Nikolai, Julie (Bob) Nikolai-Sullivan and Rachel (Brad) Durfee all of Minnesota; grandkids, Taylor and Jillian Nikolai, Zach, Luke, Jake and Matt Meschke, Anna, Bridget and Peyton Sullivan and Jessica and Nik Durfee; great-grandchild, Lenna Meschke.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Lee Nikolai; her parents, Philip and Leila Gravis Wright; brothers, Philip Wright, Jr., C.L. "Spot" Wright; and sister, Helen Boomgaarden.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

1100 13th Ave NE
Little Falls, MN 56345

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 3. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Little Falls Chapel
214 2nd St SE
Little Falls, MN 56345
(320) 632-5242
info@shelleyfuneralchapels.com

Visitation

APR 4. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church - Little Falls
305 4th Street SE
Little Falls, MN

Mass of Christian Burial

APR 4. 11:30 AM (CT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church - Little Falls
305 4th Street SE
Little Falls, MN

Tribute Wall



“ *Lemieur Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Joyce W. Nikolai*



Lemieur Funeral Homes - April 03, 2024 at 01:13 PM

KL

“ *Joyce's family,
So sorry to read about your dear, sweet Mom's passing. May she be wonderfully blessed , resting in peace to join your Dad. May you all have joyful memories to comfort you in your loss.*



Ken and Betty Lasneski - April 11, 2024 at 11:17 AM

BW

“ *What a beautiful service!* 🙏🏻

Bob and Lynn Wenzel - April 05, 2024 at 12:58 AM

BW

“ *What a beautiful service!!* 🙏🏻

Bob and Lynn Wenzel - April 05, 2024 at 12:55 AM

BR

“ All of us at Community Animal Hospital are so sorry to hear about the loss of sweet Joyce! She knew how to brighten our days every time she came in! She will be very missed by all of us!

Brenna - April 04, 2024 at 04:51 PM

FF

“ The Franciscan Sisters are deeply grateful for sharing in the life of Joyce Nikolai. Her goodness, her faith, her love of family and community brought us JOY. Rest in peace, dear women of God, dearly beloved of many people. We will miss you very much.

Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls - April 04, 2024 at 10:55 AM

TM

“ Eric, Lisa, Karen, Julie, and Rachel: So sorry to hear about the loss of your precious Mom. So many fond memories of countless times over the years having those great chats about everything from school stuff, to summer jobs, to just "What's new with you and your family!" Always such a kind person to me whenever I ran into her, and she always made time for those visits. She was also a wonderful friend to my Mom! I hope and pray that you all find peace with the wonderful memories you all were able to share together, knowing full well she will be heading to a wonderful place to now be with your Dad again.....this time FOREVER! God Bless! Tom Miller

Tom Miller - April 04, 2024 at 09:00 AM

BW

“ So sorry for the loss of your beautiful mother. Our deepest sympathies to all of you! 🙏❤️

Bob and Lynn Wenzel - April 04, 2024 at 08:30 AM



“ *The Madsen's purchased the Sweet Sincerity for the family of Joyce W. Nikolai.*



The Madsen's - April 03, 2024 at 03:09 PM



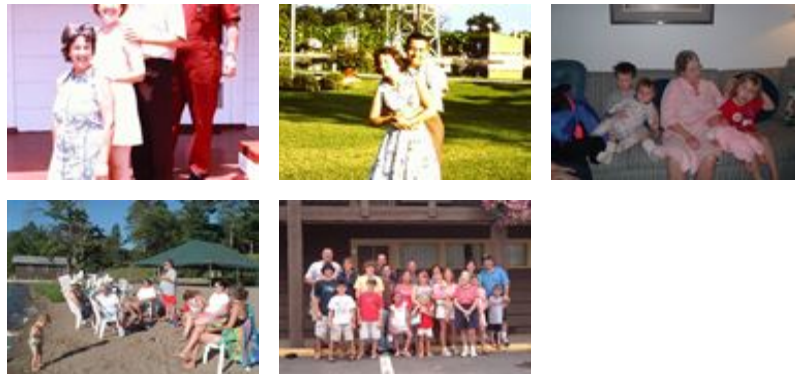
“ *2 files added to the album Life Tributes*



Lemieur Funeral Homes - April 03, 2024 at 02:30 PM



“ *72 files added to the album Life Tributes*



Lemieur Funeral Homes - April 03, 2024 at 01:10 PM

TM

“ *The Murtha’s purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Joyce W. Nikolai.*



The Murtha’s - April 03, 2024 at 07:44 AM

TM

“ *The Murtha’s planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joyce W. Nikolai.*

The Murtha’s - April 03, 2024 at 07:44 AM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Joyce W. Nikolai.*



April 03, 2024 at 06:27 AM

LH

“ *Love, Gloria and Ken Hank planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joyce W. Nikolai.*

Love, Gloria and Ken Hank - April 03, 2024 at 06:27 AM

LS

“ *Love, Tim and Becky Sullivan purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Joyce W. Nikolai.*



Love, Tim and Becky Sullivan - April 02, 2024 at 11:08 PM

CM

“ *Claudette Moran lit a candle in memory of Joyce W. Nikolai*



Claudette Moran - April 02, 2024 at 06:34 PM

DS

“ *Dody Stoy lit a candle in memory of Joyce W. Nikolai*



Dody Stoy - April 02, 2024 at 05:47 PM

MJ

“ *Lisa & family,
So sorry to hear about your Mom. She was always so nice whenever I was at your childhood house in LF. Keep all those wonderful memories close & be sure to look at all your pictures during the difficult time ahead. Please know that you are in my best thoughts!
Sending hugs,
Maria Boser Johnson*

Maria Boser Johnson - April 02, 2024 at 03:58 PM

LF

“ Love from your WWW family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Joyce W. Nikolai.



Love from your WWW family - April 02, 2024 at 03:35 PM

LF

“ Love from your WWW family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joyce W. Nikolai.

Love from your WWW family - April 02, 2024 at 03:35 PM

LC

“ Love & Peace, The “Nauti Crew” purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Joyce W. Nikolai.



Love & Peace, The “Nauti Crew” - April 02, 2024 at 01:53 PM

LC

“ Love & Peace, The “Nauti Crew” planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joyce W. Nikolai.

Love & Peace, The “Nauti Crew” - April 02, 2024 at 01:53 PM

BC

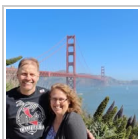
“Joyce will surely be missed in our neighborhood. I will miss our interesting talks. She seemed ageless, really. She was awesome, and she raised a lovely bunch of kids!

Bev and Dick Culshaw - April 02, 2024 at 10:27 AM

KL

“My heart is breaking with the news of Joyce passing. I have enjoyed getting to know her the last few years as she lived next door to my parents. May you be at peace and everyone to remember you as a wonderful woman.

Kim Hank Lingbeck - April 01, 2024 at 10:07 PM



“Deepest sympathy to the Nikolai family.



Renae Schneider - April 01, 2024 at 07:48 PM

MB

“My sympathy to the Nikolai family. She was a wonderful parent to all of her children. Rest in peace Joyce and my prayers are with all of your family.

Mary Blake - April 01, 2024 at 07:44 PM

KN

Thank you Mary. It's really sweet of you to think of us.

Karen Nikolai - April 02, 2024 at 01:45 PM

RS

“ Our deepest condolences & sympathy to the family’s loss of Joyce Nikolai. Joyce was joyful an hard working lady. She always had a great smile and always like to stop a visit with people she knew. She enjoyed her flowers a being outdoors. May she rest in eternal peace. God’s grace & blessings to her family.

Richard R. Schneider - April 01, 2024 at 06:48 PM

AR

“ Anne Rush lit a candle in memory of Joyce W. Nikolai



Anne Rush - April 01, 2024 at 06:19 PM

SW

Eric, Lisa, Karen, Julie & Rachel,
I'm so sorry to hear of the death of your dear Mom. I noticed it on line this evening. She was a great lady and i enjoyed hearing from her through the years. I have so many wonderful memories of your family when you were young. I know you will miss her, but she is with your wonderful dad now.
God bless and love all of you!
Sister Joyce Willenbring at St. Benedict's in St. Joseph.

Sister Joyce Willenbring - April 13, 2024 at 01:06 AM

LM

Thank you so much Sister Joyce. She always shared your notes to her. We miss her so much. Love, Lisa (Meschke) and the Nikolai sblings

Lisa Meschke - April 17, 2024 at 04:41 PM