



Barbara Jean Rolek

February 18, 1950 - May 14, 2025

Barbara Jean Rolek, age 75 of Crown Point, formerly of Chicago, IL passed away Wednesday, May 14, 2025. She was born in Chicago, IL., and attended Knox College, Galesburg, IL and was a graduate of Chicago's Washburne Culinary Institute. Barbara was an executive chef and pastry chef for more than 15 years at fine dining restaurants and the commissary of a grocery store chain where she developed a home meal replacement program. Following that she became an award-winning food writer for the Chicago Tribune and the Times of Northwest Indiana. In 2007 she won the Hoosier State Press Association Award for a story on Ketogenic diet in the treatment of childhood epilepsy. In 2008 as newspapers were downsizing Barbara transitioned into writing as a guide for About.com. Her website covered Eastern European Foods. It included recipes, photos and cultural information connected with each country. When About.com eliminated her position, she then found employment as lead writer and head creative force with an upscale online company, Ann's Fabulos Finds. The owners of the company, Troy Babcock and Ann Wzacny said "Beyond her ace writing skills, Barb was an exceptional colleague and friend. She was compassionate, kind, and always ready to offer support."

Barb was the Administrator for the Saint Francis De Sales 1968 reunion website. She was preceded in death by her parents: Walter Rolek and Mary Durski Rolek; brother: Wally Rolek. Barbara is survived by her sister: Janet Rolek; sister-in-law: Camille Podalski Rolek, and many cousins in the area.

Funeral Mass will be held on Thursday, June 12, 2025, at 10 a.m. at St Mary's Catholic Church, 321 E. Joliet St, Crown Point, IN. Rev. Peter Muha officiating. Burial is private at Holy Cross Cemetery, Calumet City, IL. She lived in Crown Point with her cats: Stella, Ruby, and Maggie, who were her primary recipe tasters. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to your favorite charity. www.burnsfuneral.com.

Cemetery Details

Holy Cross Cemetery

801 Michigan City Rd
Calumet City, IL 60409

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

JUN 12. 10:00 AM (CT)

st mary's catholic church crown point
405 E. Joliet St.
Crown Point, IN 46307

Tribute Wall



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Barbara Jean Rolek.*



June 11, 2025 at 01:08 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Barbara Jean Rolek.

June 11, 2025 at 01:08 PM



“ *Love Greg and Ruth purchased the Pretty Please for the family of Barbara Jean Rolek.*



Love Greg and Ruth - June 11, 2025 at 09:52 AM



“ *Love Greg and Ruth planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Barbara Jean Rolek.*

Love Greg and Ruth - June 11, 2025 at 09:52 AM

JW

“ Jay & Matt Wagner purchased the Heavenly Heights Bouquet for the family of Barbara Jean Rolek.



Jay & Matt Wagner - June 10, 2025 at 05:18 PM

EW

“ You will be certainly missed. A donation was made to the Greater Chicago Area Food Depository in your honor. Your pal, Eileen Wendel

Eileen R. Wendel - June 10, 2025 at 12:14 PM

JK

“ Barbara was a dear cousin and a gentle soul. I will miss her in this life, but in the next life, in “God’s Kingdom come...” I look forward to another big hug and a kiss on the cheek, like always!



Jim

Jim Kenney - June 10, 2025 at 11:51 AM

JR

“ Dearest sister,
You were a beloved sister and best friend. I will carry on your legacy of kindness, laughter, love, and baking.
Till we meet again, rest in peace.
Your little big sister,
Janet

janet rolek - June 08, 2025 at 03:54 PM

KS

I requested that The mass on June 7, 2025 at San Jose de Picacho Catholic Mission in Fairacres NM be for Barbara. Sending love and prayers in her honor. From Kathryn Sowa class of '68 and her spouse Deacon Ed Misquez.

Kathy Sowa - June 09, 2025 at 04:21 PM

FK

“ Fred, Michelle, Freddie Van Klaveren purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Barbara Jean Rolek.



Fred, Michelle, Freddie Van Klaveren - June 04, 2025 at 09:22 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Barbara Jean Rolek.



June 02, 2025 at 10:28 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Barbara Jean Rolek.

June 02, 2025 at 10:28 PM



“ I was lucky to work side-by-side with Barb at *The Times* during my stint as features editor. She was an outstanding writer, a great cook and a compassionate coworker. We had such fun coming up with outside-the-box ideas for Food section features. This was one of my favorites of hers, based on the book "*Retro Food Fiascos*" - https://www.nwitimes.com/lifestyles/food-and-cooking/article_75f31986-ff7a-5842-b14f-03cb6743395f.html

I ran into Barb a few months ago at Costco and had no idea it would be our final goodbye. She will truly be missed.

Robert Blaszkwicz - June 02, 2025 at 10:56 AM

AW

“ We lost a great friend and an awesome coworker — someone whose warmth, humor, and talent left a lasting mark on everyone lucky enough to know her. She was a great writer with a quick wit and always found a way to make me laugh, no matter what was going on.

*She had a deep love for cats and shared my affection for the wonderfully wacky world of *What We Do in the Shadows*, especially Nadia and Laszlo. We both appreciated its offbeat humor and eccentric charm.*

One of the most meaningful gestures she continuously made was taking it upon herself to bake Polish cookies for special occasions — a tradition from my grandmother that she lovingly carried forward for me. It was more than a treat; it was a way she showed care and connection.

She is deeply missed.

Ann Wzacny - May 31, 2025 at 08:37 PM

BD

“ Dear Janet and family,
I am so saddened to hear the news about Barb passing. She was always so kind. It was a pleasure meeting her, and yourself Janet, at our 41 Luncheons at Omni. I will never forget her kindness. May she have enteral rest.

Betty Durochik - May 29, 2025 at 06:48 PM



“ Debbie Perzo lit a candle in memory of
Barbara Jean Rolek



Debbie Perzo - May 28, 2025 at 09:44 AM



“ I am SO SADDENED to read the news of Barbs' passing.....💔
I met her years ago @ Ladies Workout Express & we had such fun.
I became her occasional cleaning lady & enjoyed her felines too.
Years later, we would run into one another in Jewel & always talked-
- I loved her encouraging words. Prayers of comfort for those left
behind. 🙏 She was a very pleasant Princess, like her photo. 👑

Debbie Perzo - May 28, 2025 at 09:42 AM