



Denise Lynn Mikolajczak

May 31, 1970 - April 23, 2026

In Memorial of

Denise Lynn Mikolajczak

May 31. 1970 / April 23. 2026

Of the Town of Shelby, Indiana

Age 54, a Cherished Companion & Wife And a Very Special

Mother, Daughter, Niece, Sister, Aunt, Great-Aunt & Friend.

Born and raised in Chicago, IL, Denise's family moved in her teens to Shelby,

IN.. Denise was a Lowell Senior High School Graduate, Hardworking and

ambitious, earning her own way, paying for schooling at the Cooking and

Hospitality Institute of Chicago, she waitressed at the Iron Skillet Truck Stop,

cashiered at the local Sterk's and hosted at Chinese New Moon. Even

held an Indiana Gaming Commission Occupational License, working on the

original Empress Riverboat.

Denise also attended Davenport Business College, proudly receiving degrees

in Business,

A.A. of Business Management and A.A.S. of Business Office Information

Specialist.

Her Career and Advancement included:

Commercial Real Estate / Business Attorney office as an Office Clerk

Indiana Title Corporation as a Mortgage Administrative Assistant

BankOne Corporation, Twin Tower Offices in Merrillville, IN. as a VP

Administrative Assistant for an Officer of the Community Reinvestment

Division. (Ending 2005).

Denise also was a small business owner operator, Clarian Candles, from a hobby in the kitchen to forming a business, utilizing building space, manufacturing her products, keeping the expense records and her own recipes or blends.

Denise perfected and offered her scented soy wax candles and melting tarts, scented floral arrangements, scented lotions and soaps in various sizes and amounts. She made specialty gift bags, had built a website for choosing and ordering, advertised locally and online. Personalized hand made decorations and arrangements for wedding and occasion parties. (Closed up shop 2015)

Motherhood was the utmost priority for Denise, she provided and nurtured her children to never be deprived, no matter the life dramas, always surrounded by love, while encouraging independence in themselves, to live life on their own terms. Music and singing, reading to them for learning and pleasure.

Visiting many zoos, history, art, natural and science museums, hiking, camping and amusement parks were mini vacations to bestow enjoyment and learning experiences in her children.

Denises' relationship and marriage began when she caught her husband Dan's eye way back when she was waitressing, then serendipity playing, seeing each other at local parties and events. They were married exactly one year after their "first official date" at the Izaak Walton Christmas Dance Formal (with fancy dresses and suits). Ironically, the league is less than a mile from the family's current home.

Denise and Dan's first home was a small 2-bedroom room they remodeled, added on addition, both of them digging the trenches for footings, laying block, framing and hammering together. In 2006 moved into their residence a 2400sq ft, 100+yr old home, remodeling and improving through the years, Bought additional adjoining property with a large 1800sq ft building, formally the old Shelby Community Center, now the recreation area and workshops. Denise was planning on another remodel of her kitchen, "it's been 10 years since the last renovation!" She already had the flooring samples and colors

picked.

Denise said marriage was not only two people sharing love and life, but more, it was families binding and combining, caring together, support for all, even through ups and downs, always having love and support for each other. She cherished the multifamily gatherings, like holidays, birthday parties, weddings and funerals that were shared.

Denise, the oldest sibling of 5, had responsibilities very early on in her life. She was thrust into the role of childcare, cooking meals, housekeeping, and keeping routines and stability to assist her single working father keep the group together and a thriving family.

Even later, after Denise had been married and had her own children, the siblings had individually lived with her new little family. Providing a starting point for each sibling to earn and save for themselves to go off on their own, finish school, start their careers, in return, each had been an aid to the couple and assisted them out as Nannies for the children, with itinerary, at scheduled hours and earnings, when Denise and Dan were working, attending college and beginning their careers/business themselves.

Denise was a supportive wife, as an example: she understood that her husband had another family and she included it as hers' too. His other family was of his coworkers and his Teamsters Union membership and involvement. Fund raising, she baked or provided crafts, provided meals and cookouts for coworker gatherings and meetings for union campaigns for elections and contract group meetings, even participated in picketing and protest gatherings, she even was once maced while supporting another unions' strike at a Caterpillar in Illinois. Even recently, she granted "okay" with her husband being the USW Union Local Unit President of his shop, (2021 to present)

Denise was always a caregiver, donating her time and talents or goods, assisting elderly neighbors with homemade meals and help, laundry, errands and gossip. In particular, Denise had become an executor for her Gramma, Clarian Ross. She relocated her from Chicago to our home in our quiet town.

Between 2006 to 2012 Denise cared for her Gramma, both at home for 5 years and eventually visiting almost daily while at assisted living the last year of her 82 years.

Denises' care for animals was an important part of her life, between spoiled family pets, and care for strays, And of course wildlife had her heart, feeding the wild birds, squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, fox and deer which all seemed to recognize her. She had joyfully witnessed generations of her critters.

Besides being a homemaker and avid creative cook, Denise baked large batches of cookies and cakes for all the holidays, Christmas season always included her specialty of at least 12 dozen sheet trays of Kolackis. To send out to family and friends.

If the weather permitted or sometimes no matter what, Denise was a grill fanatic, occasionally grinding her own blend of meats and seasonings for patties or sausage, Her italian sausage and spinach lasagna was one of her specialty dishes. Her handmade pizza had us spoiled, restaurant pizza will never be as good. She had to make two chicken pot pies at a time, one extra or there would be no leftovers.

Denise gardened flowers and vegetables, from seedlings to pruning plants for perfect output.

Insisting that she preferred her own mowing of our 2 ½ acres, she pruned and trimmed the shrubs and trees, and every year we would have a giant bonfire from the brush pile that she had gathered for annually.

And additionally, we sat many a cherished weekend through the years, spending time outside at the fire pit staring peacefully at the flames. Denise always had a fire pit prepared for gatherings like giant outdoor graduation parties or holiday and birthday barbecues. All guests gathered around forgetting all but the fire being the only focus everyone shared, feeling the warmth and hypnotizing captivated calm.

Denise was a hooked reader, every evening she would read from her tablet to relax before sleep.

Other hobbies and passing idle time, included art, experimenting different

media or types of painting and dabbling, she enjoyed diamond painting. Denise, for the last 20 years, energized herself with fitness, worked out with stationary cycle, elliptical machine, treadmill and sit-ups and calisthenics daily, she would walk and jog our property regularly.

Denise had music playing during most of her daily routine, she even had Dan install SiriusXM to her own garden tractor. She declared her love of Jon BonJovi and insisted to Dan that he was her "FreePass".

Denise had an obsession with outdoor holiday decorating, lately Halloween had taken over, we have had to direct traffic in order for her tours of her displays for photo opps for visitors. Denise was in her glory sharing this with others. Christmas with antique blowmolds and homemade manger scene, numerous displays, blowups and five 8 ft. fully lit christmas trees with 15,000 synchronous leds. Competition with neighbors had risen.

Denise had lately been excited about retirement soon and traveling by RV and exploring the country, even discussed cruise trip vacations and mentioned dreams of seeing parts of Europe.

Recently, due to Denises' husband Dans' health issues, and him from working usually 7 days a week, being unable to work the past months, had turned out to be GodSend because they got to spend some real quality time together rekindling their love and companionship. Joking and laughing, content and happy and anxious when Dan finally does retire. Egging him to retire sooner. Possibilities of finding and relocating "somewhere warm".

Denise is survived by her husband of 36 years: Daniel Mikolajczak, and her 2 children, her daughter: Marie Mikolajczak, and her son: Robert Mikolajczak.

Including Denises' father: Edward (SM: Sara) Gregar, Mother: Karen Gregar, her sisters: Brandy (Brian) Engelman, Joanna (Shawn) Plew, Trinity Gregar and her brother: Ed Gregar Jr. and many Nieces, Nephews, Aunts and Uncles; Inlaws Include: FIL(late, Edmond) and MIL: Joan Mikolajczak, SIL: Cheryl (late, Timothy Hyzy) Widstrand-Hyzy, BIL:Edmond Jr. (Annette), SIL:Sandra Mak, BIL:James (Diane), SIL:Debra (Mark) Miller, SIL:Christine

(Timothy) Eich, SIL:Angeline (Jim); and many related children of those.

Services are scheduled to be private and family only,

There is no public ceremony announced yet at this time.

Please leave a word in the memorial to share your love and stories of Denise.

Donations to your local Animal Shelters or Wildlife Funds are encouraged.

Burns Funeral Home, Crown Point entrusted with arrangements. Please visit

Denise's online obituary and guestbook at www.burnsfunral.com.

Tribute Wall



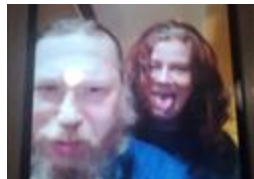
“ *My deepest condolences to you Dan and to your children. May you always remember and cherish the years of beautiful memories and joy created by your blessed union and love. God bless you and your family.* ”



Alimayu Makonnen - 16 minutes ago

DM

“ *7 files added to the tribute wall* ”



Dan Mikolajczak - 2 hours ago