



Donna Ellen Holm

July 12, 1935 - March 9, 2025

Donna Ellen (Richardson) Holm, age 89, passed away on March 9, 2025, at the Crown Point, Indiana home she shared with her son, Tim. Born on July 12, 1935, in Gary, Indiana, she lived a life full of fun, family, and friendship. Donna was preceded in death by her parents, William “Buddy” and Lucile (Matthews) Richardson; husband, Herman, and son, Todd Holm. Donna is survived by her son, Timothy; sisters, Roberta “Bobee” (George) McEwan (Florida) and Jan (Randy) Zulich (Hawaii); daughter-in-law, Jacqueline (Todd); grandchildren: Mitchell (Jennifer), Madison (John), Megan Holm (all from Michigan) and Courtney (Indiana). At the time of her passing, Donna was merely days from meeting her first great-grandchild, Carter Jo Holm. She is also survived by nephews, Brian and Robert (Florida), Evan (California) and niece, Amber (Hawaii), and five great-nieces and nephews.

Throughout her almost 90 years, Donna was a profoundly social person. It can be said that she never met a stranger; her outgoing and fun-loving personality made even new acquaintances feel comfortable as Donna easily engaged them in friendly conversations. A class officer and proud 1953 graduate of Horace Mann High School, she belonged to the Jinx social club and was selected by her classmates as the Senior with the prettiest smile. She began working at U.S. Steel as a young adult, during which time she expanded her circle of friends by joining the philanthropic and social Epsilon Sigma Alpha sorority, Gamma Mu chapter.

In 1959, Donna married her sweetheart Herman Holm, who was on leave from

the U.S. Navy, and moved to California to set up their first home on the China Lake base. After returning to Indiana a few years later, the couple started a family which soon became Donna's entire focus. Throughout the years, she supported their two sons in numerous school-related and extracurricular activities, planned family trips, maintained close ties with family and old friends, hosted numerous neighborhood gatherings, and returned to the workforce at L.S. Ayres. In 1987, the Holm family moved to Lakeland, Florida to be closer to Donna's grandparents, mother, and sister Bobee. Her husband of nearly 48 years passed away in 2007.

Donna continued her retail career for more than 20 years and retired in 2010 as a celebrated sales manager at Macy's. Donna's apparent leadership qualities earned her several awards, while her sociable demeanor prompted her to organize a group of coworkers who called themselves the YaYas. These women not only met for monthly lunches but also sponsored drives to support the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots.

Donna was an avid sports fan who could report team standings and player statistics from memory. She thoroughly enjoyed several college and professional sports, including baseball, football, basketball, hockey, and golf. Her Chicago-area roots blended with her Florida residence in her choice of favorites. Often, phone calls were discouraged because she had to cheer for the Cubs, Rays, Bears, Buccaneers, Bulls, Magic, Blackhawks, Lightning, or Tiger Woods. There were many football pools and March Madness bets over the years as well.

Donna was a spirited soul who also loved the excitement of casino gambling and enjoyed a few margaritas in her time on earth. She had a flair for turning even a simple meeting into a party. Always ready with a bright smile, our dear Donna was known for her generosity and love for family. For those of us who knew and loved her, the smooth baritone of an Elvis song or jangly music of a slot machine will remind us forever that we have been fortunate, indeed.

Burns Funeral Home & Crematory, Crown Point, IN, entrusted with arrangements. www.burnsfuneral.com

Cemetery Details

Bushnell National Cemetery

6502 SW 102 Avenue
Bushnell, FL

Tribute Wall

TR

“ I will always hear your voice... "Hi Honey", "It's Aunt/Auntie Donna", "How's Bryce?", "How's your mom and your dad?". And when visiting... "What can I get for you?" You always treated me as family. So many conversations about Bryce, his baseball, how he was doing and my own life. You weren't afraid to ask questions. If you wanted to know, you would ask. You never made it feel as though you were prying, but asking because you wanted to know.... and maybe be able help with some advice if you could. You were always welcoming and caring. There was never a "simple visit" just to catch up, it would always turn into a lunch party with a bunch of preparation. Everything had to be just right. You always put such much effort into being the best hostess - yet, ran the show as though it was just a quick throw together and was no effort at all. Always having the best smile on & wanting everyone else to be smiling as well. The best memories will be those family gatherings on the back patio with the kids splashing away in the pool. I will be forever grateful for the love that you showed, your kindness, your upbeat positivity, your advice and the sweet laughter & smiles you added to everything. Till we meet again.



Tina Rafa - March 24, 2025 at 01:23 PM

“ *When are you going to cut your hair?*

Why are you wearing earrings?

What are you going to do besides play drums in a band? You're smart, you can do something better. You'd be so handsome if you cut your hair...

Her mother wielded the same kind of disapproval towards me, but Auntie was always the hardest on me. From early childhood I was always full of nervous apprehension going to family get-togethers, especially when my eldest Aunt & Uncle were hosting. I was welcomed. I was family. I was loved. But I didn't make sense to them.

I cut my hair off. I unexpectedly became a father & married. Visiting Auntie changed.

She saw me.

The haircut helped, but that wasn't it. She saw how dedicated I was to my daughter & step-daughter. How hard I worked for my family. I was still the same weirdo, but now I made sense to her. I never got very close to my Uncle, but that was no longer the case with Auntie. Then she lost him.

Our visits became more meaningful for both of us.

I got divorced. My daughter Isabela stayed with me. We visited more often & were her nearest relatives. I was her tech support. Computer/TV/cell phone problems became convenient excuses to make the relatively short drive & visit. She adored Isabela & they amused each other without end.

She saw me.

She appreciated me.

She loved me.

She conspiratorially confided in me that I was always her favorite. Black sheep become dark horse.

She lost her youngest son.

She carried her grief like Atlas, refusing to be broken, and cherishing her grandchildren.

All my daughter's life we were a half hour away from Auntie & Grandma, while my parents were at least 3 hours away, so they saw us just as often as my parents if not more so. Isabela grew up

forging relationships with them for which I'm eternally grateful. So many wonderful memories of their joy in each other from toddler to teenager and on. My grandmother, mother, & her sisters have long been known as The Swedish Hens in my household. Individually aunties & grandmas, but collectively some kind of matriarchal mafia that you don't mess around with.

Now the Hens are two.

A younger self would be surprised to hear my older self expressing how grateful I am to have developed such a loving relationship with Auntie. A younger self couldn't even fathom how grateful I am for her relationship with my daughter. Certainly, nobody would ever accuse Donna Holm of letting her tongue get dull, but I'm humbled to have experienced that the depth of her love for her family runs far deeper than the armor she wore.

I didn't make sense to them. And I still don't make sense to most people. I don't know how to sum this woman up to those who didn't get her. So I will do it in a way that makes sense to me.

Several years ago my younger aunt was visiting from Hawaii. My mom & aunts all came to my house to visit. I took them to Hamburger Mary's, a restaurant & bar that has drag shows. Lights! Music! Drag Queens! Dancing! Drama! Auntie was carrying on & having so much fun that the group of young women next to us were cheering her on & dancing around with her. They all wanted to be her friend. Everybody loved the drag show, but Donna Holm was the life of the party.

Robert Deneka - March 22, 2025 at 08:05 PM

SS

“ What can you not say about Donna? She was bubbly, talkative and a good friend and co-worker. Even on her "grumpy" days, she was a ray of sunshine. If you were having a bad day, and even if you weren't, she was always a willing listener. Even though she moved far away from us, we kept in touch and had looked forward to seeing her again at our YaYa luncheons in the not too distant future. Family, please know that you are loved and in my thoughts and prayers. She is truly missed by everyone who knew her.

Sarah Sherrouse - March 22, 2025 at 03:01 PM

BR

“ I have the best memories of Aunt Donna while I was growing up. Most of the time it was a holiday that had gotten us all together at her house where myself and the other kids immediately went to her pool.

As I got older I brought my own kids over to get that same experience of playing the entire time and her offering food to them after they were exhausted.

She was the best person to be around everytime I was around her , and she is loved greatly

Braxton Rafa - March 22, 2025 at 09:44 AM

BR

“ My aunt was an incredible lady. Most of my memories are from childhood as we didn't see each other as much as we were older. But family gatherings at the house in Indiana were the best. The pool, the food and all the cousins, aunts and uncles, Christmas. That's when she shined. She loved having everyone at her house and together. I will miss her smile but she is forever in my heart. Love you auntie and I will see you again

Brian Rafa - March 22, 2025 at 08:45 AM

GM

“ Because of the distance between our Florida homes, Donna would sometimes come down for a few days to visit. We might play card games, dominos, or perhaps try our luck at the Indian Casino. One of the things Donna seemed to enjoy was making breakfast for me. She would ask me if I would like her to make me something to eat. I would reply, casually, that if she made it, I would eat it. I didn't want her to think that Bobee never fed me, but the main reason Bobee cooked things for me was because I was absolutely never allowed to touch the good pans. The meal was usually the "Full Monty", bacon, eggs, toast and coffee. Always prepared the way I like it. Herm had been gone for many years, and I kind of got the feeling that she enjoyed doing it as much as I enjoyed eating it. Whenever I sit down for a hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs, toast and coffee, I will share the moment with my dear sister-in-law, Donna.

George McEwan - March 22, 2025 at 05:58 AM