



Nancy Lee Lilley

JUL 23, 1944 - DEC 13, 2020



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Nancy Lee Lilley

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Nancy Lee Lilley, 76, of Grand Haven, passed away Sunday December 13, 2020 peacefully at home with family. She was born July 23, 1944 in Grand Haven to John A. and Lillian M. Kowalesky.

She graduated from Grand Haven High School in 1962 and the passing of her father her senior year strengthened her desire to pursue higher education. She attended Michigan State University where she earned advance degrees in teaching including a master's in education. Her mantra for lifelong success was always "education, education, education."

Her dream from early childhood was to teach Kindergarten, which she did very successfully for 35 years at Central School in Grand Haven, retiring in 2001. She provided a refuge of love, joy and learning for over eighteen hundred students. Her passion for teaching and love for her students grew into their adoration for her. She wanted every child to love school as much as she did and looked forward to seeing their smiles when they entered her classroom.

She married Thomas, her high school sweetheart in Grand Haven and they have celebrated over 50 wonderful years of marriage. Nancy enjoyed family vacations to Mackinaw Island for over 20 years. Annual gathering in East Lansing with extended family for Michigan State football games was also a favorite. She was especially fond of her grandchildren who had a very special place in her heart.

Nancy will be forever missed by her husband, Thomas; daughter, Christine Lilley (Marc Hoeksema) of Norton Shores, daughter, Noel McKinley (Scott) of Mill Valley California, her son, Thomas Lilley II of Spring Lake and grandchildren Callahan and Lila McKinley, Paige Lilley, her sister, Susan Hill of Grand Haven and brother, Dan Kowalesky (Cindy) of Perrinton, MI.

The family had a private service. In lieu of flowers please donate to [Grand Haven Schools Foundation](#), in honor of Nancy Lilley. Your donation to GHFS will help to ensure 3 and 4 year



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olds will start kindergarten ready for success. Please sign the family's online guestbook at <http://www.sytsemafh.com>.



Events

Nancy Lee Lilley

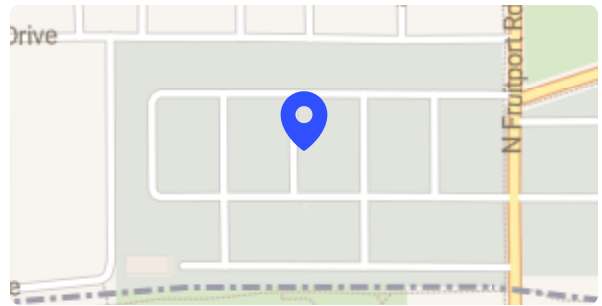
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Cemetery Details



Spring Lake Cemetery

17181 North Fruitport Road, Spring Lake MI
49456





Tribute Wall

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JS

Jennifer Stiles posted:

I want you to know Mrs Lilly you had a lasting positive effect on my younger vulnerable years. Thank you for having the patience to help a little girl that was a hot mess and feeling lost. I still remember and always will. It was so long ago but I never forget you.

September 16 at 10:25 AM

HB

Hank Brolick posted:

It was ironic that in about 1966 or thereabouts Tom and Nancy suddenly moved into Spartan Village married housing at MSU just a few units down from Sharon and I. We both had a child so we had much in common. We had many fun card game nights during that year. Than we all moved but reunited in GH about 12 years later topped by a hilarious night with the Lampe's and Lilley's that was a Peking Duck cooking event. The events and laughs that night made it a truly memorable event. We miss you Nancy!Henry and Sharon Brolick

May 4 at 5:58 AM

SN

Sandra O'neil Nuyens posted:

I taught Young 5s with Nancy at Elliot School in Grand Haven. Nancy was such a wonderful teacher and instilled the love of learning in her students.. Kindergarten is such an important first step in a child's education. Nancy was always a shining example of being a passionate teacher and brought the best out of her students. I always enjoyed working with her and was so sorry to hear about her passing. I wish your family the best as you work through your loss.Sincerely,Sandy NuyensTom II, you will remember me as O'Neil

January 12 at 1:47 PM

TO

Tommy January 27 at 7:29 PM

Hi Sandy, I was thinking about you! I am so glad you were able to work with my mom, she thought so highly of you as well!!! I know how important kindergarten meant to me with you and your class:) Thank you for sharing your kind words and experiences!! Tommy



Tribute Wall

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Scott Mckinley shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.



Dear Nancy, Mom, Nana...You're gone now. But you'll never, ever be forgotten.Now everything is new in a world without you. We all have to figure it out, without you here. None of us know how we're going to do it.You're not here now..... to answer the phone, every time we call... to listen to what's upsetting us... to never pass judgement or say a negative word... to make everyone's lives betterYou're gone. It's impossible to think about it. But your energy, life, and spirit is in all of us.You were the rock we all swirled around. All of us moving up, down, and sideways in the chaos of our lives, but you were always constant. Always there. Listening. Supportive. Loving. No matter what. Without conditions.We will love and miss you, forever and ever.- Tom, Christine & Marc, Tommy, Noel & Scott and Cal and Lila

January 5 at 5:46 PM



Tina Dee posted:

Mrs. Lilley's legacy of caring and dedication to teaching will be with us for many generations. I was in her 1968-69 kindergarten class and still have vivid memories of her kindness. I was fortunate to have such a positive start to my education. Thomas, Christine, Noel, Thomas II, and families; I send you my sympathies and appreciation.Tina Dee (née Jones)

December 31 at 7:54 AM



Nancy O'Neill posted:

Dear Lilley Family,I am deeply sorry to learn of Mrs. Lilley's death. She meant much to my family, as she was my son's kindergarten teacher and helped him adjust to school. While volunteering at Central School, I often worked next door to the kindergarten room and enjoyed hearing Mrs. Lilley speak to the children in her characteristically engaging and energetic manner. She had a remarkable ability to maintain calm control without becoming angry at unruly students. The whole community benefits when we have such a fine, caring teacher in our school system. Sincerely,Nancy O'Neill

December 30 at 6:35 PM



Eric posted:

Dear Lilley family, you've lost a beautiful woman, mother and friend. Our family grieves with you and sends prayers of love and deepest sympathy. May she be remembered always. The Thayer's. Eric & Andrea, Steve, Jim & Elizabeth and Rebecca,

December 30 at 6:40 AM



Tribute Wall

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Mary & Don Heilig posted:

Dear Family, Our sympathy in your great loss. Nancy was a dedicated, fun, loving, and kind teacher.....her students were fortunate to have her. God bless all of you and may your many cherished memories bring you comfort. Mary & Don Heilig

December 29 at 4:34 AM



Media

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Scott Mckinley shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

January 5 at 5:46 PM



Nancy and Noel



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Nancy by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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