



## Ms. Donna Jacobsen

September 30, 2020

Once upon a time a beautiful baby girl named Donna was born to Wilfrid and Edna (Dahl) Fortier. Donna had a wonderful childhood with her parents and brother Lorin, the happy memories of which always stayed with her. As an adult, Donna became a teacher at Orchard View Schools where she enjoyed working with the children and helping prepare them for their best future possible. When she retired from teaching, she still wanted to do all she could to help others and contribute to the community. In 1988, she started Tour de Force limousine service to provide transportation for people to their special events. The business grew to a fleet of three limousines, and when an extra driver was needed, she would don her chauffer's uniform and cap and drive the clients herself. After she sold the business, she remained close to several of her drivers who became an extension of her family. While she was not lucky in marriage, she finally met the love her life, Robert Peterson, in 1997. They shared a very special love and made many beautiful, cherished memories until he passed in 2003. While physically gone, he was always in her heart and she remained close to his daughters and their families.

For many years, Donna wanted to share words of inspiration and encouragement with everyone in the community and placed weekly ads in the Chronicle Clippings that always began with "Happiness is..." On occasion, an ad would end with "d." but few people knew that Donna was the person behind the ads. Donna had an incredible zest for life, whether she was teaching in high heels, serving clients in her chauffer's uniform, entertaining friends at her beloved home on Mona Lake, delivering donuts to the NSPD in appreciation of their service, silently leaving a bag of goodies outside a friend's front door as a surprise, or enjoying a good toddy. The cards and notes she sent to others always included a detailed, personal note neatly printed in her perfect script.

On September 30, 2020, the world lost this very special, classy lady. It is a particularly significant loss for her nieces, nephews, friends, and neighbors. An outdoor funeral service will be held on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 11:00 at The Lee Chapel of Sytsema Funeral and Cremation Services, 6291 S. Harvey St., Norton Shores, MI 49444 in her honor.

Happiness was... knowing this very special soul. Rest in peace pretty lady. Life on Mona-Mona will never be the same.

# Cemetery

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## Evergreen Cemetery

391 Irwin

Muskegon, MI, 49442

# Events

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OCT

6

## Funeral Service

11:00AM

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The Lee Chapel

6291 Harvey St., Norton Shores, MI, US, 49444

# Comments

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“ Donna was a wonderful neighbor. It was difficult to do anything for her as she responded with something 10 times as nice. Some years ago, my three sons, Frank, David & Daniel initiated a family tradition of bringing a Christmas basket of goodies to Donna on Christmas Eve. Pretty soon, every Christmas Eve, they were greeted with an elaborate spread of Hors d’oevres and drinks. She was an exemplary teacher by her actions. She taught them graciousness and kindness. They called Donna “the Jewel of Mona Lake.” She will be sorely missed. Sally Wildgen

**Sarah (Sally) Wildgen** - October 06, 2020 at 10:51 AM

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“ My sister and I took a special etiquette class with Donna as our teacher. We learned how yo sit properly, set a table, proper make up and appropriate dress. It was a fun and informative class even though we giggled through most of it. She was a wonderful teacher and a great neighbor for our parents.

**Anne Wildgen Merkle** - October 05, 2020 at 07:34 PM

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“ Peace Eternal Wreath was purchased for the family of Ms. Donna Jacobsen.



October 05, 2020 at 11:14 AM

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“ Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Ms. Donna Jacobsen.



October 04, 2020 at 10:29 PM

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“ Richard, Laurie, and Rachel Kane purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Ms. Donna Jacobsen.



Richard, Laurie, and Rachel Kane - October 04, 2020 at 02:07 PM

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“ Spencers, Stoners, McKennas, and Zakharys purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Ms. Donna Jacobsen.



Spencers, Stoners, McKennas, and Zakharys - October 04, 2020 at 10:53 AM

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“ Thank you, Donna for giving my dad 6 of the happiest years of his life. Thank you for your constant love and care for my family. May you rest in peace, love, and joy. Beth (Peterson) Spencer



Beth (Peterson) Spencer - October 04, 2020 at 10:42 AM

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“Death is the end of a stage, not the end of the journey. The road stretches on, beyond our comprehension” -Oliver Lodge

Many, many years ago, I met Donna while I was in the 10th grade in High School. At that time I worked at the D&W grocery store on Norton Avenue and would carry her groceries out to her car. Being the “car guy” that I am, I admired the fact that she always pulled up in the fanciest and cleanest car in town.

Donna always made an impression, a lasting impression. I can't recall ever seeing her not dressed to the nines, perfectly manicured and always in heels. Think: Jackie Onassis, or the cover of the Bergdorf Goodman catalog. Stately, well spoken, dignified, elegant and the epitome of class, yet without phony pretense. Truly the most humble person I've known. Donna was a true lady, an authentic lady and the last of the true ladies. Timeless, ageless.

Every load of groceries brought to her car was always met with a \$5.00 tip, which was a very generous tip in 1992. At that point I had no idea she owned a limousine service. Not long after..... I'll never forget the day she pulled up and parked right in front of the door to the grocery store in that long white stretch Cadillac and ran inside to buy a bouquet of flowers. In fact I can still picture what she was wearing that day. I stopped and admired the car, she noticed, and asked if I would like to work for her. This car fanatic couldn't wait for the opportunity to be near all these fancy limousines and my answer was a resounding YES.

The rest is history. We clicked right away. Despite the difference in “chronological age” as she would always put it, we shared the deepest bond over all these years. Somehow I was worthy to be part of her inner circle.

From donning a tuxedo and being the parking valet to her guests at her infamous catered parties, to moving the furniture and dusting the baseboards in her sunken living room, or hanging white Christmas lights on the trees lining her long driveway to her chateau on “Mona Mona” boy did we have fun. Many many nights spent just talking at her dining room table, into the wee hours of the morning. Our “fireside chats” as she'd refer to them. Sometimes with a toddy, or two. She was famous for her “Donna Drinks” where they were mixed so strong I sprouted a few more chest hairs just sipping them. Donna's philosophy with many things in life: more is better. Donna was lighthearted, warm, generous to a fault, loyal, genuine and had deep, heartfelt empathy for everyone she knew.

She knew how to live, knew how to laugh at herself and made those around her feel like they were the most important people in the world. She impressed upon me that respect is the basic foundation for any relationship and without it, there was nothing in which to build upon. She was fiercely proud, an independent lady who would never let a single soul do anything for her without prompt repayment or a thoughtful gift in return. Ever. Don't believe me? Ask anyone! She would simply go without before ever dreaming of asking for a favor. While she owned the limousine service, if a client hadn't tipped the chauffeur, she'd quickly open her purse, produce cash -usually three times the amount any tip would've normally been-and gracefully insist the the

driver accept it. Believe me, there was no telling her “No”.

Having attended charm school in Chicago as a young lady, she had impeccable social skills and handled herself in the most dignified manner. It seemed to come natural to her. So natural, in fact, that she instructed her own charm school lessons on the mezzanine of the Occidental hotel before it was demolished.

Donna. Lived. Life. To the fullest, with style and flair. To me, the saying: they broke the mold..... doesn't begin to cover it.

High school was an unhappy time for me, a tough time, with few friends. My last day of 12th grade it was finally over, I walked out of that school for the last time, and who did I see? You guessed it.....Donna Mae. Parked right in the front blocking traffic. Dressed in her chauffeur uniform and gold trimmed chauffeur hat. I can still see it. Standing next to that unmistakable, can't miss it, gleaming white stretch Cadillac, holding a sign with my name on it in perfect script, as if she was picking up a dignitary from the airport. She was caring for her ailing mother at that time, running her household alone, and the busy limousine service, yet she took the time out of her crazy schedule to make me feel loved. I bet she never knew that after she opened the door to that car and I got in, I sat in the back seat with tears of appreciation in my eyes. No one could make you feel special like she could. I could go on for days and fill almost infinite pages describing this wonderful woman who I loved wholeheartedly. Truly the best, most meaningful friendship I've ever had and the love of my life. So many really wonderful memories of her.

I would like to say directly to Donna, it's impossible to convey just how much I will miss you. The day I knew was coming, and so dreaded.....has finally come. Even hearing the almost imperceptible hints you dropped, I still thought you'd live forever. To say that your absence will leave a profound void, hardly seems sufficient. Life will never be the same without you. But those are selfish words, you didn't deserve to live in pain. Thank God, I know I will see you again in heaven. As deeply as it hurts, I take great comfort in knowing you're now standing proud and whole. Chin up and shoulders back. As it should be. The horrendous pain you lived with the last few years, has been erased. Now you have a new, perfect body. For eternity. I'll hold you oh so close to my heart, until I see you again. Get ready for more fireside chats.

All my love to you sweetheart. Rest in heavenly peace.

**Derek J. Link** - October 03, 2020 at 10:25 PM



“ Derek, your words were perfect, she adored you as a proud mamma! Thank you for loving her and letting her love you back.

Our hearts are now empty and our eye red from the tears but she Lived life and Loved everyone that walked in her path.

**jan** - October 04, 2020 at 07:10 PM

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“ AK

Alan Kleier 6 minutes ago

The first time I met Donna was at my wedding when I married her niece almost 50 years ago. My fondest memories of Donna were at her beautiful home on Mona Lake in Muskegon. I believe we celebrated Thanksgiving at her home a couple of times in the 80s -- once when her grand-nephew Michael was still in a playpen, and a couple years later when Donna tried teaching him the proper etiquette on how to use a fork! The video I took of that was one for the ages. (Kristi, I remember you were there with Dave and Jocelyn. It was at time that you, Nan, Laurie, Sally, and Larry asked Grandpa Fortier questions for posterity, writing down the many memorable details of his life). It might have also been the year that Larry and I had to get something from my hotel room and missed the Bears miraculous, victorious ending over the Lions in the final moments of their traditional Thanksgiving Day game. Such great memories. I remember later years at Donna's when Rebecca was demonstrating to the family her amazing gymnastic talents and Mike was performing his "Moon Walking" moves! Those were the days! But none more amusing than when Aunt Donna chauffeured us in her stretch limousine to the restaurant to celebrate Great Grandma Fortier's 100th Birthday!

While my marriage ended in the early 1990s, my relationship with Donna never did. I loved the many phone conversations and laughs we shared, the last one I think only several months ago. I would tell her how beautiful she was and she'd refer to herself as an "old broad!" That was "my Aunt Donna!" My Aunt Donna, because she always still considered me a part of her family -- right up to the last time we spoke.

So, Aunt Donna, thank you for making me a cherished part of your life. You were, and always will be, a cherished part of mine. Now go run into the arms of Grandma and Grandpa, and laugh it up with your brother, Lorin, and sister in law, Helen. Most of all, enjoy your eternal life with Jesus. Your job in our world is finished. It's time to really start living! I love you. -- AL

Alan Kleier - October 03, 2020 at 09:05 PM

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“ My Great Aunt Donna has always been and will always be, the Great Lady to me. The definition of a lady : a woman who is refined, polite, and well-spoken..... a women who’s sense of self comes from confidence without brashness, from courtesy, from kindness, and often includes a distinct sense of style. The world was a better place because of this wonderful lady. I remember talking on the phone till 2 in the morning just talking a laughing. To talk to Auntie D was to be uplifted in your heart and soul and to know her was to be better for the honor of her company. My daughter Regan who is 8 simply afforded her Auntie D. They had a special little connection that could not be stopped by distance. They would talk, text and send silly little pictures. I am so grateful for that. Regan wanted so badly to go stay with Auntie D and wanted her to give her princess lessons. In truth if anyone could give princess lessons it would be The Great Lady herself. It was just a month ago Donna told me , “Don’t try for perfectionism just fo the best that’s in your heart and soul.” “We all have shortcomings..... believe me, I have a TON! So be happy, be positive, be well & keep the Holy Spirit in your heart!” These words meant for me, defined her way of life. I have to say part of me wants to just stay cuddled up and cry and cry. But, I choose to be happy, to be positive, to be well and keep the Holy Spirit in my heart. Even though it is breaking. I also won’t say “Good Bye” to the Great Lady. I will only say , “ Till we see each other again, on the other side of heavens gate. Love you today, tomorrow, and always.” Your great niece Carissa Heck Shirley

Carissa Heck Shirley - October 03, 2020 at 01:03 PM



“ The first time I met Donna was at my wedding when I married her niece almost 50 years ago. My fondest memories of Donna were at her beautiful home on Mona Lake in Muskegon. I believe we celebrated Thanksgiving at her home a couple of times in the 80s - - once when her grand-nephew Michael was still in a playpen, and a couple years later when Donna tried teaching him the proper etiquette on how to use a fork! The video I took of that was one for the ages. (Kristi, I remember you were there with Dave and Jocelyn. It was at time that you, Nan, Laurie, Sally, and Larry asked Grandpa Fortier questions for posterity, writing down the many memorable details of his life). It might have also been the year that Larry and I had to get something from my hotel room and missed the Bears miraculous, victorious ending over the Lions in the final moments of their traditional Thanksgiving Day game. Such great memories. I remember later years at Donna's when Rebecca was demonstrating to the family her amazing gymnastic talents and Mike was performing his "Moon Walking" moves! Those were the days! But none more amusing than when Aunt Donna chauffeured us in her stretch limousine to the restaurant to celebrate Great Grandma Fortier's 100th Birthday!

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your eternal life with Jesus. Your job in our world is finished. It's time to really start living! I love you. -- AL

**Alan Kleier** - October 03, 2020 at 06:54 PM



“ What a sad day, reading the obit of Donna! I met Donna when I worked at the bank, about 40+ years ago. She was introduced to me, as a client, by a local Realtor. I was about 27 at the time, Donna was older than me, but that made no difference, we became chatting buddies over the years, if only when we met during our "about town outings" I have always told my friends, Donna's photo needs to be in the dictionary next the the word "Lady' - Oh, my gosh, what a lady she was. She was so kind, so pretty, so thoughtful and most of all, she always was interested in YOU, never putting herself first. When Donna met Mr. Petersen I knew she was SO HAPPY - she glowed when speaking of him. I lived on Mr. Peterson's block and I would often see Donna there. So sad that he passed much to soon. Donna, Rest in Peace, Thank God for allowing you to touch so many people.

Joy Malmquist.

**JOY MALMQUIST** - October 11, 2020 at 11:44 AM