



Linda L. Spencer

December 8, 1948 - May 27, 2023

Linda “Lou” Spencer (Watts) passed away peacefully Saturday, May 27th 2023 at the age of 74 at her lake house in Wisconsin. She had been battling pulmonary complications for months. Lou is survived by Steve Spencer, her loving husband of 42 years and her sons Tim (Dianna) Wachtel of Huachuca City, AZ. and Tom (Eliza) Wachtel of Highland Park, IL., her sister Betty (Rob) Angus of Ottawa, IL. and her grandchildren Miguel, Gabe, Emma, Anthony and Mateo Wachtel. She will also be missed by her nephews/nieces Brad (Julie) Angus of Ottawa, IL., Jason (Audrey) Angus of Piper City, IL., Rhonda (Brad) Johnson of Ottawa, IL., and Sherry Medellin of Texas as well as numerous great nephews/nieces. Lou was preceded in death by her sister Many Ann (Richard) Fricke and her parents Wallace and Annabelle Watts.

Lou grew up on the family farm just south of Ottawa, IL. She graduated from Ottawa Township High School in 1966 and went on to graduate from the University of Illinois and then started her long career as a math teacher. After teaching in several schools as an Army spouse, she finished at North Hardin High School in Radcliff, KY., and then transitioned to working in school administration. She worked in technology and assessment for Oldham County Schools, the Kentucky Board of Education and Jefferson County Schools. She retired from Jefferson County Public Schools allowing plenty of time for reading, visiting Wisconsin and spoiling her grandchildren.

Though mom moved out of Illinois after college, she always talked fondly of her days growing up on the farm. She enjoyed life there and still proudly displayed a senior showmanship trophy for beef cattle from her 4-H days in her home. My mom's years in teaching and testing appealed to her meticulous nature and she always told me she was happiest teaching real world math skills to her students which was why she continued to teach consumer math all those years at North Hardin. While the students at North Hardin lost a great teacher, I was happy to see mom take a new job in Oldham County because she was no longer taught at my high school and my shenanigans were no longer immediately reported to her! Mom enjoyed eating at new places, nights at the theater in Louisville and following the thoroughbreds as Kentucky Derby time approached. There was never a shortage of horse portraits around the house. She also always held a nostalgic place in her heart for summers in Wisconsin.

As I drove home from Wisconsin after visiting Steve on Memorial Day weekend following her death, I crossed a bridge east of Stephens Point, WI that spanned the Tomorrow River. I drove over that bridge many times and never noticed it. I take it as a reminder that tomorrow is never a sure thing and to appreciate those people in our lives while we have them with us. If mom would have had more tomorrows, she would have liked to spend most of them at the lake house in Minocqua, watching the kids play on the dock with her dog Willy standing in the bay window. I really came to understand why she loved the lake house and our annual family week vacation so much after I started my own family. It reminded mom of her own summers there growing up and all of tomorrow's summers that her kids, grandkids, and extended family would enjoy for years.

Over the years, mom also found great purpose in supporting the Family Scholar House (FSH) of Louisville, KY. This organization supports mostly single parent families in Louisville with housing and educational assistance.

FSH provides them a safe place to live and educational opportunities, allowing these families to excel in life and the community as they head out on their own. We will be having a private ceremony to celebrate mom's life in July at our annual family vacation. In lieu of flowers or gifts, mom would have appreciated contributions in her memory to the Family Scholar House <https://family-scholarhouse.org/>. Please share any stories or pictures you have.

Tribute Wall

NH

“ So sorry for the loss of your wife/mother. Linda and I were great friends in high school. Memories of classes together, drill squad, sleep overs are still something for me to cherish. Although we didn't see each other after high school, because we both moved away from Ottawa, we connected on Facebook. Linda was a very special person and friend. I will always remember her love for math, the farm, and life in general. Prayers you might find comfort and peace in your memories of and live for her. Norma Hartman

Notma Hartman - June 26, 2023 at 11:19 AM

CA

“ Tom/Gerry and his family grew up vacationing every summer with the Watts families. We continued this tradition until around 1977 when our family expanded and we traveled various ways. Lou was always her happiest up North altho I have to say we were always so happy to be together, lately on Facebook. We will miss her booming laughter and funny comments. I hate that I won't see her again, but maybe I will 🙏. We love the Watts family, forever missing Wally, Annabelle, and Mary Ann. Our sympathy to each of you 💖

carol - June 19, 2023 at 01:05 PM

CD

“*Lou was a blessing to me. I am a better person and a better leader for her guidance, inspiration, and enthusiasm for our mission of lifting families out of poverty, and starting new cycles of success through education. She actively supported our work and cheered us on at every opportunity. She celebrated our graduates and she invested in them and their children, so that they could become fully self-sufficient, contributing members of our community. She was the very first member of our valedictorian society, I am heartbroken at Lou’s passing, but will continue to be influenced by the love and kindness she showed to us through the years. Along the way, Lou became family for all of us. We join her family in honoring a life well lived and the love that never dies.*

~Cathe Dykstra, Family Scholar House

Cathe Dykstra - June 02, 2023 at 08:33 AM

TW

Cathe, we appreciate your kind words. I’m not sure how mom found Family Scholar House but she was inspired by your drive and mission. She witnessed “the cycle” perpetuate itself during her years of service in KY’s public schools and saw Family Scholar House as a light and model for success in breaking it.

-Tom

Tom Wachtel - June 19, 2023 at 11:07 AM