



Suzanne M. Stevens

August 22, 1943 - December 20, 2024

With family by her side, Suzanne Stevens of Arbor Vitae passed away peacefully on December 20, 2024, at Seasons of Life Hospice in Woodruff. She was 81 years old.

Sue was born in Wausau to Emil and Evelyn Keckhaver and grew up as so many of her generation did, on a farm, the fourth of ten children. Her happiest childhood memories were of feeding the animals, swimming in the creek, and spending time alone out in nature away from all her siblings, where it was quiet and she could think. She attended Lakeland Union High School and excelled in drawing and art, but ever the pragmatist, vigorously pursued a business degree from Nicolet College after graduation. Upon returning to the Northwoods and the dense forest she loved, she married her high-school sweetheart, Ted Vernick, a singer and guitar player for a local band, The Tornados. They had one daughter before divorcing. She then married Dick Stevens, an avid fisherman and outdoorsman, and they remained together until his death in 2001.

Sue worked as an Insurance Agent in Minocqua for over forty years, eventually running her own successful agency there. She was well known and respected by many in the area and often spoke of the joy she found in helping people. Never one to sit still, she continued to be active in a service capacity by volunteering as transport for the sick and elderly after her retirement.

She was a voracious reader of books, papers, and journals, an enthusiastic gardener who loved to dig her fingers in the soil every Spring and watch her efforts bloom, a creative and talented chef of elaborate holiday dinners and small family meals, an empathetic nature and animal lover who never met a stray she didn't like or try to save, and a savvy and independent woman of strong will and conviction, happily chainsawing fallen trees while maintaining her property well into her 70s. She was also, unbeknownst to most, a skillful bowler, wielding a mean fifteen-pound ball to the dismay of many a pin.

Sue is survived by her daughter Monique (Max) Stevens-Olson, sisters Colette, Marci, Lynn and Bonnie, brothers Rick and Bill, a multitude of nieces and nephews, and three aged cats, Molly, Katie and Winnie. She was preceded in death by brothers Jim and Emil (Sonny) Jr. and beloved sister Alice. She was a mainstay for her family, reachable at the same telephone number for forty-five years and always willing to lend an ear. She will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved her.

Per Sue's request there will be no funeral or memorial service. Those wishing to honor her memory are encouraged to make donations to the Oneida County Humane Society, 1852 N. Stevens St, Rhinelander, WI 54501 www.ocfspets.org or to The Nature Conservancy, 4245 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203 www.preserve.nature.org