

Karen Jo Stefanick, age 63 of Grand Rapids, MI and formerly of Manistee, died early Sunday morning, December 20, 2015 at the Manistee County Medical Care Facility.

She was born on July 19, 1952 in Manistee, Michigan, daughter of the late Clemens and Dorothy (Marzinski) Stefanick. She was a graduate of Manistee Catholic Central High School class of 1970. She then attended Aquinas College where she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree on English and Secondary Education Certificate. She continued her education at Michigan State University where she received a Master's Degree in College Student Personnel Administration. Karen also attended Western Michigan University receiving an endorsement for Secondary School Counseling. Karen's professional career started at Grandville High School where she taught English and Journalism. In 1978, she accepted a position with Aquinas College where she served as Residence Hall Director and then Associate Director of Admissions. During her time at Aquinas College, Karen held various positions including: Coordinator of Pre-Major Advising, Adjunct Faculty, Coordinator of New Student Programs, and Associate Director of Career Services. In 1997, Karen joined the staff at Grand Rapids West Catholic High School as a Guidance Counselor until her retirement due to health issues in 2006. Karen's passion for education was reflected in her involvement in various professional organizations. She served as Great Lakes Regional Coordinator for the National Orientation Directors Association from 1990 – 1996. As an active member with the Michigan Association of College Admission Counseling, she received their 1988 Outstanding Service Award. She served on the West Michigan Counseling Association Board, the Human Resources Board for the Children's Museum of Grand Rapids, and was Co-Director of the Greater Grand Rapids Cheer for Charity from 1987 – 1993 for their annual fundraiser. A member of St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Grand Rapids, Karen was involved with the long-range planning committee, a hospital minister, and usher for many years. Karen enjoyed watching Notre Dame and Michigan State University sports. She attended many plays and enjoyed her time with friends and family. In 2014, Karen helped plan and attended her Aquinas College 40th Reunion. Karen was a very kind and compassionate person who cared about other's happiness and knew how to be a good friend.

Karen is survived by one brother Tim Stefanick of Freesoil; her nephew, Andy Stefanick of Manistee, and great nephews, Cody and Evan Stefanick, also of Manistee. In addition, Karen is survived by her dear aunts Carlene Nowak and Marilyn Kaminski of Manistee, along with numerous cousins and many very close friends and neighbors.

Karen was preceded in death by her parents.

Mass from the Order of Christian Funerals will be celebrated on Monday, December 28, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church on Sixth Street in Manistee with Reverend Richard Schaeffer celebrant. Burial will follow at Mt. Carmel Cemetery also in Manistee. Visitation will be held one hour prior to her funeral Mass at the church. A Memorial Mass will be offered at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Grand Rapids at a later date.

A Memorial has been established in Karen's name for Aquinas College with envelopes available at the church.

The Herbert Funeral Home of Manistee is in charge of funeral arrangements.