

Jean Ann Ward, age 74 of Manistee, died unexpectedly on Monday, Dec. 16, 2019 at her home while fighting a courageous battle with cancer.

She was born October 25, 1945 in Manistee and was the daughter of the late Leonard & Jean M. (Washneski) Raczkowski. She was a graduate of St. Joseph High School's Class of 1963 in Manistee. Jean almost always had a smile on her face and a joke to tell. She was a social butterfly and loved being around and interacting with people. She enjoyed being active. She had a huge heart, sassy personality and great sense of humor, but was also known for her tough and "tell it like it is" attitude. She was empathetic and understanding. She felt compassion and concern for others and displayed it through her actions. She was extremely thoughtful and expressed her care through her card writing ministry. She always made it a point to remember and recognize special occasions for those she cared for. When she mailed a card, you could bet it would arrive promptly. She was never late with a Birthday or Anniversary card. She also joyfully celebrated her own birthday each year. She always looked forward to well wishes, quality time, and gifts from loved ones and friends. Jean especially enjoyed the Christmas holiday. She loved decorating her home and was great at calculating strategic placement of her Christmas tree ornaments. She was meticulous in making sure they were evenly spaced all the way around the tree. Writing Christmas cards was also at the top of her 'to-do list' every December. She had an innate ability to make people feel valued and loved, no matter the season. She was the 'Hostess with the Mostest' at McDonald's in Manistee for several years where she developed many cherished friendships. She had an affinity for angels and butterflies and through her caring heart, was an earthly angel to many. She loved spending time with her family. In addition to raising her son, she provided childcare and development for her niece and nephew for over 8 years. Jean was the tidiest person you'd ever meet, and she was jokingly referred to as 'Sarge' by her niece and nephew. She always ran a 'tight ship' and knew better than anyone how to keep a clean home. She also enjoyed spending time with her grandson. She loved drag racing and spent many days and nights around the track. She devoted a lot of her time to volunteer work as well. She was a member of Divine Mercy Parish and a past member of the V.F.W. Walsh Post #4499 Auxiliary.

She is survived by her son Jamie Ward and her grandson Riley Ward; her sister Sandra (Donald) Pelarski, brother Duane Raczkowski and sister Judith (Scott) Skiera all of Manistee; her nieces and nephews: Shannon Jenson, Bryan Raczkowski, Kimberly Pelarski, Brooke Greskowiak and Jordan Skiera. Numerous grand-nieces, nephews and cousins also survive her.

Mass of Christian Burial will begin at 11:30 AM on Thursday, December 26, 2019 with visitation starting at 10:30 AM. The service will be held at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Manistee with Rev. Zejlko Guberovic celebrant. Burial will follow at Mount Carmel Cemetery in Manistee. A luncheon will promptly follow the burial at the St. Joseph Parish Center. The family would enjoy your company to reminisce and further celebrate the life of Jean.

The Herbert Funeral Home of Manistee is handling funeral arrangements.