



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Joan Marie Gamache, of Manistee, Michigan who God called home on September 29th, 2024, at the age of 81. Born on December 18th, 1942, to birth parents, Angelina Scamardo and Jephtha Armstrong Evans in Kansas City, Missouri. Joan was raised by adoptive parents, Francis V. Muszynski and Geneva Marie (Harland) Chamberlain. She was very proud of her dad (Francis), who was a traveling musician, which resulted in Joan's extraordinary life of living in 17 different cities.

Joan married Gordon Rutowski in 1960 in Florida and raised their four children (Jeffery, Mark, Jennifer and Timothy) in Manistee, Michigan, Cadillac, Michigan, & Houston, Texas until her husband Gordon passed in 1996 at the age of 53. Joan married Scott Gamache in 1996 in Clear Lake City, Texas and they eventually returned to Manistee where Joan resided until her death.

Joan was a 1960 valedictorian at St. Joseph High School in Manistee. Later in life at the age of 46, she graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology in 1988. She earned her Master of Social Work Degree in 1991 from the University of Houston.

Joan's life and career encapsulates her immense devotion to the well-being of others. Her capacity to love extended far beyond family and included her community, her church and strangers who were all recipients of a serving heart.

Joan's career spanned many different states and towns. In Michigan, she worked in Manistee at Mercy Hospital and Orchard Beach State Park as well as the Dept of Social Services in Cadillac. She often expressed that her favorite memories were working at Orchard Beach State Park. While she resided in Houston, Texas, she worked for the University of Houston Police Department while she worked on her degrees. Joan also worked at Houston Hospice and the VA Medical Center. She also lived for a short time in Charlotte, North Carolina and worked at the Carolinas Medical Center. Returning to Manistee, she retired from her work life at Manistee-Benzie Community Mental Health.

Her selfless volunteer work was also evident throughout her life. Joan was the Vice Chair of the National Association of Social Workers in Houston, Manistee Catholic Central Board Secretary for four years, Divine Mercy Parish Council Chair, clinical volunteer and board member of the Manistee Area Community Clinic, and for many years, the Coordinator of Matthew 25:35 Food Pantry in Manistee. She was a member of the Manistee Choral Society and West Shore Community College Choir. Joan especially loved singing as an alto in church choirs with her husband, Scott.

Above all, Joan's family was the light of her life. Remaining to cherish Joan's memory are her husband, Scott Gamache; children and their spouses, Jeffery (Kimberly) Rutowski; Mark (Dubrena) Rutowski; Jennifer (Brian) Clark and Timothy (Ha Sidney) Rutowski; stepchildren and their spouses, Jody (Kevin) Glunt; Rodney (Jeanette) Gamache and Robert (Angie) Gamache.

Joan adored all her 28 grandchildren & great-grandchildren.

Preceding in Joan's death are husband, Gordon Rutowski, 8/18/96 and father, Francis Muszynski, 1999; mother, Geneva Chamberlain, 2000; birth mother, Angelina Scarmado; half-brother, Michael Pollack and half-sister, Mary Teresa Pollack.

Despite a challenging start in life when she was given up at birth and through trials and tribulations at a young age, Joan persevered. She has left a rich legacy overflowing with love, family, faith and a service to others.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Saturday, October 19, 2024, at Divine Mercy Parish (St. Joseph Catholic Church) in Manistee, at 11:00 am with Reverend James Bearss and Reverend Mitchel Roman con-celebrants. Following the funeral mass a funeral luncheon will be held at the St. Joseph Church Parish Center. The family will receive friends at the church on Saturday morning from 9:00 am until the time of the funeral mass.

Graveside services will be held at 2:30 pm on Saturday, October 19, 2024 at Oak Grove Cemetery also in Manistee.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial will be established in Joan's name for the Matthew 25:35 Food Pantry. Envelopes will be available at the church on Saturday morning.

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