



Helen Jean Bartkowski

July 8, 1940 - February 13, 2021

BARTKOWSKI, Jean, (nee Cerne) February 13, 2021 Age 80.

Helen Jean Bartkowski, or Jean as everyone knew her, was born on July 8, 1940, to Bill and Helen Cerne in Erie, Pennsylvania. Early in her life, the family relocated to Conneaut, Ohio, where they lived above the bakery that Bill and Helen owned and operated. She had four siblings; Bill, Dick, James, and Judy. She attended St. John Catholic School through 12th grade and then went to Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio, where she earned a degree in dietetics, graduating summa cum laude. An internship at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit brought her to Michigan. One evening in March of 1964, Jean was set up on a blind date by one of her nursing friends and in this way met her future husband Richard.

They married on October 10, 1964 and soon started their family. They had three daughters: Beth (Tim) Sanislow, Lynn (Mark) Simlar, and Anne (Wayne) Cook. Jean was a homemaker who stayed busy by volunteering as Brownie leader and head of the library at Pinewood Elementary School in Warren. She also developed a small business that she ran out of her home, baking and decorating cakes. Over the years, she created cakes for hundreds of people in her community, celebrating their birthdays, graduations, first communions, and weddings. Her cakes were sought after and appreciated by her many clients.

Her daughters each had two children, giving Jean six grandchildren who quickly became the apple of her eye. They are Celia and Maggie Sanislow, Owen and Reed Simlar, and Jack and Katharine Cook. She was completely enamored of each and every one of them and was never happier than when she got to celebrate their accomplishments. She was modest about herself (you would never know she was valedictorian, Homecoming Queen, or the co-fencing champion of her county in her younger days), but she glowed with pride when she spoke of her grandkids and their talents! As she grew older, Jean developed a love of scrapbooking and each grandchild cherishes a scrapbook that highlights the fun activities they enjoyed at “Marnie’s” house.

Her devotion to her husband Rich was complete and total. She managed their home with the efficiency and prowess of the most experienced of homemakers, and love ruled there. Jean doted on Rich and took thoroughly perfect care of him. They traveled in their later years, visiting most of our country's states, including Hawaii and even went to Europe several times.

Jean Bartkowski had a beautiful soul. She lived her love and made sure that her family knew always just how much she loved them, whether that was through stocking the cupboard with favorite snacks or calling to check on them when she knew they were struggling with one of life's problems. She was kind and compassionate and someone to emulate. She will be forever missed.

Private visitation Wednesday 3-8pm at Wujek-Calcaterra & Sons 36900 Schoenherr at Metro Parkway (16 Mile Rd). Funeral Thursday instate 10am at St. Faustina Catholic Church 14025 12 Mile Rd (East of Schoenherr) until time of Mass 10:30am. Entombment Resurrection Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Vincent de Paul, the Alliance for the Great Lakes, or Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio.

Share memories with the family at their "On-Line Guest Book" @ WujekCalcaterra.com.

Events

FEB **Visitation** 03:00PM - 08:00PM

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Wujek - Calcaterra & Sons Inc - Sterling

36900 SCHOENHERR RD, Sterling Heights, MI, US, 48312

FEB **Instate / Funeral Mass** 10:00AM - 10:30AM

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St. Faustina Catholic Church

14025 12 Mile Road, Warren, MI, US, 48093

Comments



“ My wife and I are backyard neighbors to Rich, and when we moved in 4 years ago both Rich and Jean were so friendly and welcoming. We always enjoyed chatting over the fence to the two of them, mostly about the state of our neighboring gardens. Jean was sweet as can be, always asked how we were doing and loved watching our two golden retrievers playing in the backyard. We just found out about her passing today from another neighbor and were so saddened to hear the news. Sending prayers to Rich and the rest of his family at this time of great loss, she will be very sorely missed!

-With love, Kristen and Kelly

Kristen Maisel - March 09 at 04:26 PM



“ It's often thought that grandmothers really see the best in everyone, and nobody could ever have personified that more than Marnie. Even that little nickname from the oldest grandchild stuck with her for all of our lives. She truly cared so much for each of us, and her friends and all the extended family. There was never an occasion where she wouldn't send a card or give you a container of orange Tic-Tacs. Even though I was the 5th out of 6 grandkids, I still recall all of the special memories that all of us created with her, and everything I couldn't recall is in my scrapbook that she made for all of us grandchildren from our first day of life to our 5th birthdays. There's always many cute baby pictures of us, and family pictures on our first birthdays and Christmases and Thanksgivings and everything after. Of course, there were the trips to Stoney Creek and visiting Ms. A next door, and hearing her stories about the old bakery and her brothers, and of course, the blessed occasion of spending the night with Marnie and Papa, and the Toaster Strudels in the morning. As my sister and I got older, it became the trips to Donut Castle that we looked forward to. We always loved to joke about her pictures, but not because it bothered anyone, but because she was so passionate about us remembering those special days, and of course, every photo was marked neatly with her impeccable cursive. She always had snacks and drinks around, everyone's favorites were always stocked or on the basement shelves. All of these memories are just the ones that stand out to me, we could sit in that basement for hours and pore over photos and albums for ages and remembering all the great times we had with her, but we would only recognize what was taken from us. And yet, she always emphasized memory. At Marnie and Papa's 80th birthday party, she leaned over and said, "I always count on you to remember the little things, so promise me you'll never forget me." Nobody who knew you could ever forget you, Marnie. Especially not your precious cardinals, which we will always take care of for you in your loving, caring, compassionate, understanding, patient, and irreplaceable memory.

-Jack

Jack Cook - March 06 at 08:33 PM



“ As the eldest of the Krahe cousins, Jean set the example of making each of us feel like close family. I know our mom and dad, Ruth and Ray, always enjoyed time with Jean and Rich. It feels good to know that she is once again with her mom, our Aunt Helen, her sister, Judy, and each of the other family members that went before her.

Chris Krahe - February 18 at 09:39 PM



“ Our cousin, Jean and her husband Rich would always visit my parents, Uncle Bob & Aunt Julie Krahe, even up to their final days in a nursing home. My parents loved their visits. And as seems to be the consensus of all the memories posted, Jean was a good & faithful servant. I would still correspond with Jean, most recently talking in December. I also received a Valentines card last week. And, as unimaginable is the grief felt in her loss, I pray that her good & faithful works/memories will keep her alive in our hearts. I keep her whole family in my prayers & hope the peace of God remains with them.

Sue Krahe Luteran

Sue Krahe Luteran - February 20 at 08:14 AM



“ Jean was my back row church friend at St. Edmund/St. Faustina church. We shared weekly family news for more than a decade. We were bonded in the same concerns we had for them. She prayed for my family and I prayed for hers when things did not go smoothly. Despite health issues, she forged ahead with her constant love for Rich, her daughters, their families, her grandchildren. She cherished them and nourished them every step of the way. We would exchange gifts some holidays, and I made a small cake for her one time...until I realized that she was a master and professional cake decorator. I gifted her with candy after that! Jean pursued her life, talents, hobbies and faith at Godspeed. She was an amazing, sweet, dear gift to all of us. Even though we were not able to go to church recently, she continued sending us cards for the holidays. I received her Valentine's card this year, and she said she hoped to see us again. I am so sad for the loss of Jean and for her grieving family...those she loved and those who loved her.

Maddy and Art Wagner

Magdalene Wagner - February 18 at 05:01 PM



“ Jean was a beautiful women with a beautiful soul. She was the unofficial matriarch of our neighborhood. Always welcoming new neighbors or organizing the neighborhood garage sales. It was a pleasure getting to know Jean. Even with all her own kids and grandchildren she never forgot my sons birthday, Christmas, Easter etc..Reading her obituary and accomplishments didn't surprise me one bit. I always knew she was a very special women. My husband and I were devastated to hear of her passing. Her presence will be truly missed and the neighborhood she welcomed us into will be a less bright. Valarie & Nick Murray

Valarie and Nick Murray - February 18 at 07:32 AM



“ Aunt Jean was like another grandmother to me, since I unfortunately lost my grandma Ilene when I was a baby. She was warm, loving, gentle and genuine, to name a few. She welcomed everyone with open arms and made sure you felt at home. She was an amazing woman and raised three amazing daughters as well! God bless you aunt Jean, please watch over us all from heaven.

Karlee Bednarowski - February 17 at 02:55 PM



“ I feel like one of the luckiest people alive to have been one of Marnie's grandchildren. That's what we grandkids called her - Marnie. It was a name given by the oldest of us, Owen, and it stuck. We now carry a hole that will never be filled, because Marnie put so much into it and gave so much to all of us. We miss her. It's as simple as that.

When I went through three weeks of awful panic attacks in high school, missed school, and spent sleepless nights worrying and scared, I was also worried about what my grandma might think of me when she found out. But from Marnie, there was no judgement, only love. Only love. She told me that she could understand, and that she was there for me, and she brought small treats and gave me big hugs. Because that's who she was. I can only hope to live my life half as well as she lived hers.

Let me tell you a bit more about her, from a grandchild's point of view.

She made each of us, all six, our own scrapbook, filled with pictures from our birth through our 5th birthdays. I have spent many hours poring through my book and my sister's, looking at the pictures she took and chose and picked and placed with care, and the comments she wrote to accompany them in her signature cursive. I know that I will spend many more hours reading them.

You probably knew this, but she was the queen of snacks. Once she found out what snacks you liked, she always had them stocked at her house. When we went on day trips to Stony Creek Metropark as children with Marnie and Papa, one of the first things unloaded from their car was the big gray snack bin. Us grandkids always got second breakfast that day, usually in the form of Poptarts.

Marnie gave us so many gift bags over the years, filled with candy that she knew we liked, cards, money, soaps, ornaments. And her love.

She and Papa were there for us if we were sick and our parents couldn't be home. Their house feels like the closest thing to home without actually being it.

Marnie once helped my sister, Maggie, and I, sew little blue flowers onto dishcloths for our Mom's birthday. I have very vivid memories of sitting with her by her sewing machine in the basement, watching as she taught me how to loop the needle through the fabric.

She taught us so much. She taught me how to bake. Every year, we would decorate cut-out Christmas cookies with her (I still have not found a better recipe for them than hers). I can distinctly remember the feeling of her guiding my hands as we cut the butter into the flour for an apple pie dough. Once I was old enough to bake on my own, I was so proud and so happy to share the products with Marnie, and to hear her feedback. I look forward to making her recipes, though it hurts to know that it will be without her.

Before my sister and I were old enough to drive, Marnie would take us Christmas shopping for our parents every year, and we always ended the day with dinner at Steak N' Shake. There was something so very special about burgers and milkshakes

and dinner with our grandma, just the three of us.

She had a wonderful laugh, and a joyful giggle. It was always such a joy to make her laugh.

When I was a kid, I was so proud that my favorite color was purple, just like hers. It felt like a special secret just between us.

At family parties and get-togethers, I have many fond memories of playing board games with Marnie (Whoonu and Aggravation were most common).

I will miss hearing her phone calls, and her little Marnie-isms and expressions that were so signature to her.

Every time I see a cardinal, I'll think of her, and the ones that she and Papa fed peanuts to on their back patio. When the lilac bush in our backyard blooms this spring, I'll think of her, in their delicate smell and their purple petals.

I could keep typing for weeks about memories with Marnie. But what it all really boils down to is that we loved her, and she loved us. An indescribable, inconceivable amount.

- Celia

Celia Sanislow - February 17 at 12:18 AM



“ To Aunt Jean, my Godmother, who was truly a special person. I am still in shock and have a terrible sadness in my heart. Ever since I was a child, you have given me so much love and kindness and you continued that compassion for my husband and children. You encouraged me through every milestone with your thoughtful cards and your incredible pastry talents made my wedding cake a most beautiful creation. Please know that I am praying for your entire family and may your memories be a blessing.
I will miss you.

Anita

Anita - February 16 at 08:48 PM



“ How can we possibly say goodbye to someone we have known our entire lives?! So many memories come flooding back. When we think of Mrs. B, it seems like she was pretty much a part of most of our childhood memories – so many backyard barbeques, kitchen card games, school events, sleep overs, etc. It was rare that there was a day that Mrs. B wasn't at our house or we weren't at hers. She and our mom shared so many things together – macramé classes, cake decorating classes, Brownie troop leaders as well as frequent trips to Farmer Jacks and K-Mart (which later turned into Kroger and Target trips). They shared such a wonderful friendship and helped each other through good and bad times throughout the years. And, of course, there was scrapbooking, that we all were a part of. We would run into Mrs. B at the store copying her pictures for scrapbooking. She was an integral part of our childhood, actually our lives, even recently stopping by to collect her Super Bowl winnings. She was an amazing woman, a wonderful friend to our mom and an important person in our lives. Rest in Peace Mrs. B. All our love, Darlene and Karen

Darlene & Karen - February 16 at 10:55 AM



“ I often hear people say something like, "The world lost a bright light," when someone dear to them passes. But recently, a friend of mine said that the heavens above got a lot brighter today. I like that; it reflects a celebration, and Mrs. Bartkowski is someone that should definitely be celebrated.

We all want to leave this world having mattered, having made a difference in the world and the lives of the people around us. Well, I think Mrs. B made a difference in the lives of everyone she knew. For anyone that was lucky enough to know her, you know what a wonderful woman she was. She loved her family with the ferocity of a mother bear and touched the lives of all she knew. The best example I can think of is how I saw her treat the friends of her children. Mrs. Bartkowski had 3 girls and welcomed all of their friends into her home with open arms, treating them with kindness and generous amounts of love, so much so that I think a lot of kids had the opportunity of feeling a warmth and acceptance that wasn't always felt while visiting other families' homes. It felt like a privilege to be welcomed into their home. You were part of a community. When at the Bartkowski's you felt like one of the family and that made a huge difference in so many kids' lives. While you might have felt you didn't belong anywhere, you felt like you belonged at the Bartkowski's.

I met Anne through dance and spent a tremendous amount of time with she and Mrs. B throughout high school. During that time I learned a lot from the Bartkowskis. From my perspective, I would say she taught her children, and I would assume her grandchildren, how to be humble; not to judge a book by its cover; to be resourceful; to be loving, kind, polite; to work hard for what you want; to respect others; and to carry yourself with elegance in any situation, even if you felt like you were drowning on the inside.

One of my favorite memories is from Beth's wedding. The song "I just called to say I love you" came on. Mr. Bartkowski danced over to me and said, "I love this song! I need to dance with my 4th girl." While he twirled me around the dance floor, Mrs. Bartkowski was talking to family, but we twirled by her as she was talking, watching, laughing, and smiling. When the song ended, Mrs. Bartkowski gave me a hug and told me she loved me. Over 25 years later and the memory still fills me with love.

In writing this, it brought me joy to celebrate the Mother, Friend, Teacher, Sister, Aunt, Wife, and amazing Grandmother that she was. We were so blessed to know her. Go in peace, until we see you again.... -your "4th girl"

Vanessa Zoeller - February 15 at 10:49 PM



“ When you share 55 years of friendship with someone like Jean, it is heart-breaking and impossible to even think about saying goodbye. Our spirit is completely broken over this sad, unbelievable news. She was a beautiful person...always there to listen, give encouragement, share in your happiness, and cry with you in your sadness. Our lives will never be quite the same without her. Jean and Rich both hold a uniquely special place in our hearts & we pray for the entire Bartkowski family.

Love,
Hilda & Fred

Hilda and Fred - February 15 at 08:09 PM



“ Mrs. B. was so very kind and welcoming. I remember walking her garden with her and scrapbooking in her basement. She loved her family so much. She will be missed

Renee Jordan - February 15 at 07:50 PM



“ Jean was one of the nicest people I knew. She always called and kept in touch. She loved her family and was so proud to talk about all her daughters and their beautiful families. I will miss her.

Roz Behaylo - February 15 at 05:39 PM



“ Mrs.B was so very kind and welcoming. I remember walking her garden with her and scrapbooking in her basement. She loved her family so much. She will be missed

Renee Jordan - February 15 at 07:45 PM



“ "Such beautiful tributes to an amazing woman. I never knew your mom, but I knew of her essence through her daughter Anne and her family. The best of Jean lives on and shines in them and her family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. May she rest in peace." Len and Nina Shipley

Nina Shipley - February 16 at 02:18 PM



“ We have been friends with Jean and Rich for many years, and the news of her passing hit us hard. .We will remember the good times with her and her sense of humor. Since we are so far away this year, we will send our thoughts and prayers to Rich and her whole family. We will miss her very much.-- Bob and Sandy Platz

Sandra Platz - February 17 at 12:07 PM