



## Donna Marie Soberalski

December 10, 1934 - December 16, 2024

Donna Marie Soberalski age 90 of Custer passed away on Monday, December 16, 2024. When looking at the sum of her 90 years of life, the first thing her family queried about, was how do you put the love, impact and accomplishments of her life into words?

Donna was born on December 10th, 1934 in Muskegon, the daughter of Harry and Ruth (Walker) Johnson. As the youngest of 4 children and the only daughter, Donna was a seamstress and a cook from a young age. Although she never let it define her, she was technically illiterate and received a 9th grade education from Fruitport Schools. Donna was just 18 when she met Richard Southwick, also from Muskegon, whom she would marry in 1954. Soon after their marriage, they were anxiously looking forward to the birth of their daughter. Unfortunately, their time together was cut short as she and Richard were involved in a car accident which took Richard's life. By the time she was 19, Donna had been married, was a widow, and was a new mother. While Donna was in recovery from the accident, a friend suggested a blind date. In walked Roger Soberalski and the rest is history. They were married on May 7th, 1955 at St. Mary's Church in Muskegon.

Upon settling in Ludington, Roger and Donna raised their family, built a home and by the 1960's established their Lake House on Eden Lake in Custer. Between these two homes, Donna was proud to host her 4-H club that grew into one of her life's greatest accomplishments. Donna would go on to teach hundreds (yes, hundreds) of children, adults, or anyone who wanted - how to swim. She even taught her Amish friends basic water survival skills of how to swim fully clothed. Every summer, Donna would host a 4-H camp where campers would turn over a boat, learn water safety - all while sleeping under the stars and having a campfire. It was common that Donna would be in the water for hours at a time, if not the entire day, usually swimming across the lake which would be at least a one mile round trip. When she wasn't in the water, you could find Donna sewing and cooking - skills that she had learned and expanded during her time working at Thompson's Toggery in Ludington. She loved to teach anyone who wanted to learn sewing, both by hand and by machine. She had regular clients who would visit her home throughout the years for fittings, and whenever Donna learned someone was getting

married or having a baby, you could expect her to arrive at your party or shower with a handmade quilt she created with much love and precision. A few of her most cherished memories included making her oldest granddaughter's wedding dress, along with completing perfect alterations to her youngest granddaughter's Miss Michigan competition evening gown. Although it's not exactly known how many 4-H'ers Donna had over the years, she remembered them all, no matter how much time had passed. Donna was named the prestigious Homemaker of the Year in 1983 from the Western Michigan Fair Association and in 2007, she celebrated 40 years of being a 4-H leader. She was very proud of both her children becoming 4-H leaders and her granddaughter having a successful 4-H career.

Donna will be remembered as a phenomenal wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend. She was known for always having a hell-of-a-good time, treating every person she met with kindness, and feeding everyone. If you've ever met Donna, you could never forget her bright smile and how she made you feel. There are so many words and ways to describe the impact that Donna leaves behind. One thing her family would agree on, is that she wasn't phony - she was the real deal. She cared deeply, loved fiercely, lived boldly, and left a legacy that most people could only dream. She overcame health issues and multiple hip surgeries with an abundance of grace. Despite any physical or mental limitations, they never became a barrier for her to accomplish whatever she set out to do - without fail.

Donna will be greatly missed by her children Diana (Phil) Sleeper and Ron Soberalski all of Ludington; her granddaughters Shannon (Don) Cole of Washington, IL, Teresa (Adam) Grubb of Holland, Jolee and Shelby Soberalski of Ludington; her great-grandchildren Samuel Cole of Chicago, IL, Isabella Vandenhavel of Ludington, Tori Alvesteffer of Hart, and Carter Grubb of Holland. Donna will also be missed by her twin-brother Donald Johnson of Fruitport, and brother-in-law La Vern Sobieralski of Ludington; along with numerous nieces, nephews, and friends who will miss her as well. She is missed by her beloved cats, Babe and Bernie.

Along with her first husband Richard Southwick, and her second husband Roger Soberalski, Donna was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Robert (Fern) Clevestine, and Jerry (Bonnie) Johnson; her brother-in-law Gerald (Virginia) Soberalski; and her sister-in-law Becky Johnson.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Donna at 11:00 am on Monday, December 23 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Custer with Rev. Daniel DePew as celebrant. Burial will take place at Pere Marquette Cemetery in Ludington. Friends may

meet with her family for a time of visitation on Sunday evening from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services – Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville; and on Monday morning from 10:00 am until time of mass at St. Mary's Church. Those who wish to remember Donna with a memorial donation are asked to please consider the Sewing Classes at Ludington Center for the Arts, or Mason County 4-H Clubs.

Please visit Donna's memory page at [www.wymanfuneralservice.com](http://www.wymanfuneralservice.com) to share a memory or tribute of Donna with her family.

# Cemetery Details

## Pere Marquette Catholic Cemetery

5866 West Sixth Street  
Ludington, MI 49431

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **22**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services - Stephens Funeral Home  
305 E. State St.  
Scottville, MI 49454  
(231) 757-3333  
wyman-stephens@sbcglobal.net  
<https://www.wymanfuneralservice.com>

## Visitation

DEC **23**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Mary's Catholic Church  
85 South Madison Street  
Custer, MI 49405

## Funeral Mass

DEC **23**. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Mary's Catholic Church  
85 South Madison Street  
Custer, MI 49405

# Tribute Wall



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Donna Marie Soberalski.*



December 20, 2024 at 11:18 AM

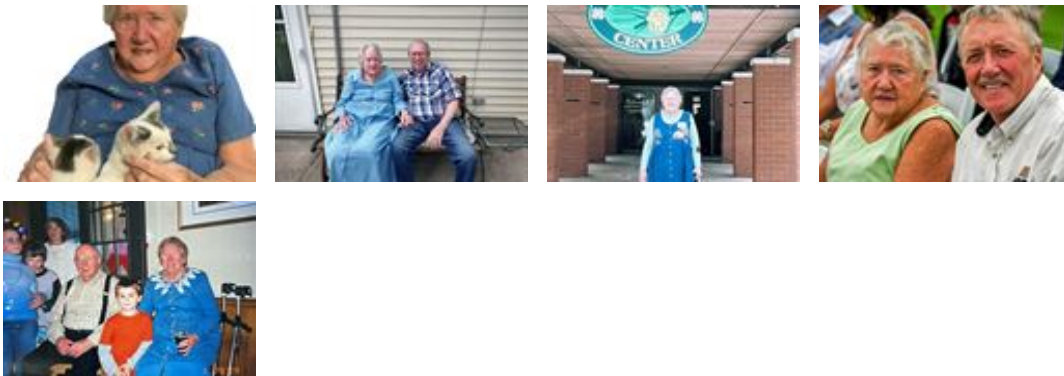


“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Donna Marie Soberalski.

December 20, 2024 at 11:18 AM



“ 36 files added to the album LifeTributes



Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services - December 19, 2024 at 05:40 PM

RB

“ *Ron and Cindy Barwin purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Donna Marie Soberalski.*



Ron and Cindy Barwin - December 19, 2024 at 03:58 PM

RB

“ *Ron and Cindy Barwin planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donna Marie Soberalski.*

Ron and Cindy Barwin - December 19, 2024 at 03:58 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Donna Marie Soberalski.



December 18, 2024 at 02:58 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Donna Marie Soberalski.



December 18, 2024 at 01:23 PM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Donna Marie Soberalski.



December 18, 2024 at 12:06 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Donna Marie Soberalski.

December 18, 2024 at 12:06 AM