



Annette M. Sowder

May 21, 1941 - June 6, 2023

On a beautiful Michigan Tuesday, June 6, 2023, Annette Maria Sowder, loving mother of two and grandmother of eight, passed away at the age of 82.

Annette was born on May 21, 1941, in Cologne, Germany and was raised, along with her sister, Helga, by her parents, Gerhart and Magdalena Floess.

Growing up in war-torn post-World War II Germany, Annette and Helga yearned to go to the United States. In preparation Annette earned a certificate in translation of German, English, and French. In 1960, Annette and Helga took a ten-day journey by ship to Ellis Island in New York, lived with an uncle in New York, and soon thereafter became American citizens. Annette moved to Chicago and, in 1961, married William ("Bill") Eugene Sowder (1935-2021). Annette worked as an administrative assistant before having children. She then stayed home to create a loving household and raise the kids for over a decade before returning to work. Most of her career, and up until retirement, was spent at the German company Siemens, where her translation skills became an important part of business between Germany and the United States. She was honored by Siemens on several occasions for her hard work and dedication.

Annette and Bill raised two children, Hans and Claudine ("Cloey") in Evanston, Illinois, and then later in Atlanta, Georgia. Annette and Bill divorced in 1980 but remained friends throughout the years with a common interest in their children and grandchildren.

As a mother Annette was matchless. Her children grew to become successful,

independent adults, despite thoroughly testing Annette's stamina and resolve during their teenage years when Annette was a single mother. Continually undeterred and fueled by unconditional love, Annette helped each of her children navigate tough points in life through patience, love, and prayer. Annette retired and moved to Port Orange, Florida, in 2007 and lived a block away from her sister, Helga, in a beautiful retirement community. Also divorced and with two children, the two German immigrants spent hours relaxing on the beach admiring the beauty of the ocean and looking east across the water, on some days reminiscing on a life that began almost 5000 miles away some 60 years prior.

Annette had a select group of friends whose companionship and love she cherished. Annette was known for her honesty and, from time to time, seemingly unfiltered opinions and perspectives that would result in either profound laughter or surprise by whoever was within earshot. More than anything, she was kind and generous, helping family and friends alike throughout her life with her time and resources during times of trial. She had lifelong relationships and was devoted to several close friends in Atlanta, Port Orange, and Chicago. Some of Annette's greatest joys and memories were the many trips she took overseas with friends to see and do new things as she reveled her golden years.

Annette was preceded in death by friends and family whom she esteemed and loved. Her greatest heartbreak was losing her daughter, Cloey Lisa Sowder, whom she loved and cherished deeply, to cancer in 2007. Only now, 16 years later, is she reunited with her in God's kingdom. Annette is survived by her son, Hans Gerhart Sowder (Susan); son-in-law, John Paul Herring (Cloey); and grandchildren Maggie (26), Emma (25), Johnny (24), Mia (23), Emily (23), Nate (22), Samuel (18), and Daniel (16).

In lieu of a service, a memorial celebration of life with close family will occur in October as mom/Nana/Annette's ashes will be put to rest in the ocean, off the coast of Georgia, she crossed to come to America so many years prior.

Donations in Annette's memory will be appreciated in her name at Breast

Cancer Research Foundation (bcrf.org).

Tribute Wall



“ *Annette M. Sowder*

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