



## Barbara Gene Lewis

January 12, 1932 - June 20, 2026

Barbara Jean Leonard Lewis was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan on January 12, 1932 to Emil and Clara Rothenbecker. She passed away peacefully on June 20, 2026 with family members at her side. She was the seventh of eight children. She and her sister Katie had a life-long debate as to WHO was actually the youngest child. The family struggled through the Great Depression, both financially and emotionally. Barb helped her older siblings as they started their own families and moved out of the family home.

She was invited by a friend to visit Saline High School one day and was introduced to the classroom. When asked if any of the students had questions for her, Jack Leonard raised his hand and asked for her phone number! Thus began their 76 year love affair.

Jack and Barb quickly started their family with daughters Jacqueline (“Jackie” Leonard Rowe) and Marilyn (Marilyn Leonard Vanover). They were closely connected to friends and family, and they built a relationship with Saline United Methodist Church. They were adventurous and traveled across the United States, often in family groupings. Barb lovingly welcomed sons-in-law Les Rowe, and Randy Vanover into her nuclear family.

Barb’s family cheered her on as she pursued her GED and then her nursing degree in her early forties. She worked at the Ann Arbor VA Hospital for over

twenty years, caring for many physically and emotionally injured ex-soldiers through the years. She loved incorporating her nursing skills into her everyday life.

She loved nature. Like her father before her, Barb loved planting and nurturing beautiful flower beds. She also enjoyed gardening. And she loved to walk. It was a very important part of her life until the time very near to her passing. For a period, she pursued running as a hobby and looked for opportunities to run in fund-raising events.

Many family memories were forged in Barb and Jack's Lewiston, Michigan second home. There they welcomed friends, family and their expanding horde of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Their given title was "Grandma(Grandpa) Great" by these young people, and this nickname proudly made its way onto their vehicle license plates. Their surviving grandchildren are Ryan Rowe (Heather), Brent Rowe (Karen), Marci (Marilyn) Rowe (Todd Masura), Melissa Vanover (David Bolger), Brad Vanover (Natalia), and great grandchildren Hannah Rowe, Andrew Rowe, Eliza Rowe, Keegan Vanover, Adelaide Vanover, Chase Vanover, and Grant Vanover.

Barb's strong will and defense of her family was a force to be reckoned with. She possessed great love and quiet strength, and loved playing card games (especially Euchre). One had to earn the opportunity to be her Euchre partner! Barb was known for her quick wit and fierce sense of humor. She was an avid sports fan, especially of the Detroit Tigers and several college sports teams, both men's and women's.

As the end of her life approached, she was ready to reunite with her family in heaven. We too, one day, will all be together with her.

As per her wishes, there will be no funeral or memorial services. There will be

a private burial ceremony at Oakwood Cemetery in Saline, Michigan where she will join her beloved Jack.

The family wishes to commend and express deep gratitude to Hospice of Lenawee County. Memorial donations may be made to Tecumseh United Methodist Church, 605 Bishop Reed Dr., Tecumseh, MI 49286.

# Cemetery Details

## **Oakwood Cemetery**

227 West Michigan Ave  
Saline, MI 48176