



Norma Dorothy Smith

September 5, 1937 - January 5, 2024

Norma Smith, age 86, of Saline, Michigan passed away peacefully on Friday, January 5, 2024, with her family by her side. Norma was born September 5, 1937, to the late Charles and Marie Meyer, and was the loving sister to the late Marianne, Joan, Carol, and Chuck Meyer. She is survived by her four children Chris (Roz) Smith, Julie (Tom) McElmurry, Brendan (Julie) Smith and Brad (Alli) Smith, her six grandchildren Tara McElmurry, Colleen (Mike) Rybolt, Nathan (Paige) Smith, McKenna (Rocco) Smith, Leah Smith and Parker Smith, her great-grandchild Cameron Smith, along with many “grand dogs.”

Norma was born in Buffalo as the youngest child of her family, but arguably never a true child, as she was always independent and mature for her age, ready to take on the world. She could be found in Carl Meyer’s Hoff restaurant where her family provided delicious German dishes to the Buffalo community. Her time in the restaurant likely sparked her inspiration for her own kitchen, as she was an avid cook, loved trying new recipes and sharing them with those she loved. Notable dishes are her famous sour cream coffee cake, German potato salad, numerous soups and stews and most recent fan favorite, her hot chicken salad with potato chip topping.

“Learn as if you were going to live forever. Live as if you were going to die tomorrow,” a quote from Gandhi she lived by. Norma graduated from D’Youville College in Buffalo with a BA in history and economics, and her

learning continued her entire life. An avid reader and news junkie, she also enjoyed spiritual, metaphysical, and political discussions. She was always interested to see if you had read the latest column from Maureen Dowd or Heather Cox Richardson or had caught David Brooks on Friday's PBS News Hour, and if you hadn't, she'd fill you in. These worldly conversations were center stage at her weekly Sunday Morning Coffee gatherings, which began at the Drowsy Parrot and then continued at Brewed Awakenings.

Norma met her ex-husband while she was in college in Buffalo, and they began a family there. His work moved them to Rochester, NY, Trumbull, CT and then to Saline, MI. She was a stay-at-home mom until her divorce, when she began working at University Microfilm Incorporated (UMI), then owned by Xerox. Norma spent 20 years there, climbing the ladder and retired as a vice president of operations. A single mother of four and often the only woman leader in the corporate boardroom, Norma was a tenacious trailblazer of her time, setting an example for her children and grandchildren, who have also gone on to be successful in their own fields.

After retiring from UMI, Norma stayed busy by becoming a consultant for both private industry and nonprofits, while also dedicating her time volunteering with many causes throughout her community, including Catholic Ministries, Trinity Health, St. Joseph Mercy Health System, Saline Area Schools Foundation, Washtenaw Area Council for Children at Risk, among others. She was also fond of traveling, getting her passport stamped in the UK, Ireland, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Costa Rica, Canada, Mexico, Germany, France, along with many domestic trips with friends and family. Along with her interest in travel, reading and cooking, Norma had a love for animals, especially whales, specifically beluga whales, which she loved to visit at the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. In 2012, she had the opportunity to swim with those belugas, and last year on a trip to Cabo San Lucas with some of her family, she enjoyed watching humpback whales in the wild. One of Norma's favorite

phrases was “live large,” and that’s exactly what she did.

Norma embraced aging gracefully, but there were some moments when she revolted, like when it was time for her to get hearing aids. She decided it was also time to get a tattoo - a hibiscus flower on her chest, which she proudly showed off to her family that Christmas. This move, along with all her travels and the rest of her life story, is why her grandchildren all agree on the term “badass” to best describe their Nana.

The pages of Norma’s planner were always full of her favorite things - weekly games of bridge, activities at the senior center, Friday morning breakfast at The Saline Inn, Sunday Morning Coffee, and visits with “The Virgos,” a sisterhood she formed with three other women as they bonded over their star sign and many other life experiences. She also enjoyed regular get-togethers with her dear friends Nancy, Dipper, Fr. Tom, and Sister Rachelle.

Perhaps most importantly, Norma was the best mom and Nana to her family. She would make every visit special for her grandchildren stocking her pantry with their favorite cereals, always including Lucky Charms in that mix. She manned the toaster every morning making sure everyone had their fill of “holy bread” (Paesano bread from her beloved Zingerman’s). Norma also made sure each visit included one of her classic “mystery trips,” which took her family to new or fun spots around the greater Ann Arbor/Saline area. She tried her best to incorporate a little magic and whimsy in her role as a Nana, even one time taking her older grandchildren on a “fairy hunt” years ago in Mill Pond Park, armed with “fairy dust” (sparkles) and flashlights running and giggling throughout the playground. Family visits to Saline also included a favorite pastime known as “pond driving” - attempting to hit golf balls across Mill Pond from her backyard. Mostly, she simply loved being around her family, whether it was being at a major life event like a college graduation or

playing a game of Uno or Rummikub. It is without question that her favorite titles in life were mom and Nana.

Norma coined the phrase “you’re in the golden circle of light,” as a kind of prayer to a family member or friend as they were traveling, to keep them safe. It’s been fondly shortened to “GCL” by some of her family and has become a regular phrase for many to spread love and well-wishes to those near and far. So, as we close - GCL, Nana! We send you off in the golden circle of light now and always. We love you so.

A Memorial Gathering will take place on Saturday, April 6, 2024 from 2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the Saline Senior Center, 7190 North Maple Road, Saline, MI, 48176. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, The Shedd Aquarium or Saline Area Social Service. Other ways to honor Norma would be taking a walk in nature, feeding the birds or simply taking a moment to be in awe of the Earth’s beauty. To leave a memory you have of Norma, to sign her guestbook or for directions please visit www.rbhfsaline.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

APR 6. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Saline Senior Center
7190 North Maple Road
Saline, MI 48176
<https://www.salineseniors.org/>

Tribute Wall

JH

“ You're in my thoughts. I met Norma about fifteen years ago while she was visiting Brad in Kirkland. Brad and I live in the same condo complex and have side by side community garden plots. On several of Norma's visits to the west coast, my friend Brad has included me to come say "hi" to his mom and have a little visit. Norma's positivity, warmth, intelligence and love of family have always impressed me most. I found Norma to be creative and to have a wonderful sense of humor. I will always feel fortunate to have met Norma as well as to have a most wonderful neighborly friendship with Brad and now Alli too! With sincere sympathy and condolences to the entire Smith family. May your loving memories be in your hearts and comfort you always.

Jan Haberzette - April 13, 2024 at 06:37 PM

DM

“ Norma was a friend and a great neighbor. We lived in Haywood Heights Condos here in Saline. Norma was very active on the Board of Directors at Haywood Heights. Norma was extremely active on the board and passed this interest on to Clarke and I. We meet some if not all of her family and was honored when Norma told me, Clarke and I had acquired a spot, [photo] of us on her refrigerator. This was a custom Norma and her family enjoyed. We also had the honor in meeting her good friend Father Tom. We was invited to Norma home and Father Tom cooked a Walleye dinner and enjoyed a fun evening. Norma will be missed greatly and each day I pray we will meet again. Normawas a Blessing and ❤️ a true Friend. Until we meet again, Dan McGraw & Clarke Flewelling.

Daniel McGraw - April 05, 2024 at 02:01 PM



“ I am really going to miss Norma. I was in her son, Chris's class. I know her from Girl Scouts and from St. Andrew's church activities. Her involvement in the Saline Community benefitted a lot of kids like me. Thank you, Colleen

Colleen Crossey - April 04, 2024 at 11:41 PM

PK

“ I met Norma while Volunteering at Hope Medical Clinic in Ypsilanti. Hope Clinic is an incredible place to serve and it is so wonderful to serve with other like minded people. I always always appreciated Norma's kindness to me as I was not in a very good place when I first met her although most would not have know that. still her kindness stuck out. I was fortunate to still connect with Norma after she retired from Hope Clinic when she would frequently come in to the Pharmacy where I am currently working and again her kindness stood out to me. I felt so blessed by her because she always made me feel like she had a special place in her heart and interest in me..I mattered..A true gift to give another person. Thank you Norma..My Mom always said never say goodbye just say see you later, so, see you later Norma. Peace,Pat

Patricia Kennedy - March 20, 2024 at 01:06 PM

PM

“ hope to see you on the other side Norma, if Aunt Hellen will let me in

Paul Meyer - January 21, 2024 at 12:13 AM

DR

“ Norma was such a lovely lady and an inspiration to many, including myself. Goodbye sweet lady, you are missed but enjoy your new journey.

David Rhoads - January 20, 2024 at 08:57 AM

MR

“ Norma was truly an inspiration and mentor to many and will be greatly missed especially her laughter and calm demeanor. I consider myself lucky to have grownup living next to the Smith family, enjoying their warmth and spirit that was a product of Norma's influence and charm. I can only hope that same spirit has been passed down to her grandchildren and no lost on this world.

Maria Ruedinger - January 15, 2024 at 06:59 PM

LS

“ My husband Dennis worked with your mom at UMI, and my mom (Ann Jones)and your mom were friends in Saline. They took a trip together and your mom visited her on Anna Maria Island. She would like to send a card to the family!

lynn stepaniak - January 13, 2024 at 07:59 PM

JM

Lynn, please contact me a mcelmurryjulie@gmail.com

Julia McElmurry - January 17, 2024 at 06:33 PM

TL

“ What a beautiful obituary for an amazing woman. I learned a lot about Norma - especially love that a tattoo accompanied the hearing aids! I'll add she was also badass as she gave Julie and the gang our first beer (we may not have been 21 🤔). Prayers for all of you. I'm off to feed the birds, in honor of Norma, as they're struggling in this snow storm.

Trudy (Siefert) Lampen - January 12, 2024 at 02:07 PM

RC

“ I was so sad to see this. I have very fond memories of Norma, along with her neighbors Bob and Woodie Merchant, from my many years working with Tom Kirvan at the Saline Reporter. She was, indeed, a trailblazer and inspiration to all women of her generation and my own and I'm sure her grandchildren. Godspeed, Norma. --Renee Collins

Renee Collins - January 12, 2024 at 12:52 PM

KL

“ I am missing my dear friend Norma. We had many meals together catching up and sharing what was happening in our lives. I appreciated and sought out her advice, and or opinion often. This I know for certain she loved and was very proud of her children and grandchildren, the new great grandchild, even the grand-dogs. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.
Kathy Lawless

Katherine Lawless - January 10, 2024 at 04:21 PM

BB

“ I enjoyed getting to know Norma throughout the years on a few City of Saline citizen task forces. I always got the impression that she would skillfully, politely and firmly put me in my place if ever we were on opposite sides of something, which fortunately we weren't! She was thoughtful and thorough in her civic deliberations, and personable and passionate about service and community. She will be missed!

Bill Beardsley - January 10, 2024 at 02:20 PM

BN

“ To the entire Norma Smith Family, please accept my condolences and heartfelt prayers to all of you with the passing of your Mom. With our family's move to Saline in August of 1980 from Brecksville Ohio, Brad was our first friend we made on Bluegrass Lane and I remember how much your Mom always made us welcome in your home! So many great memories of your Mom, Chris, Julie, Brandon, and Brad - from the Saturday two hand touch backyard football games to a strawberry poundcake festival in your backyard - if I remember the year correctly, it was Fall of '80 or Spring of '81 - but everyone was there having a great time with all the food! Great memories of a very special Mom and family friend! Your Mom will always have a special place in our heart. Our prayers are with your entire family with your Mom's passing.



Bradley Nadig - January 10, 2024 at 12:37 AM

K(

“ My sincere condolences to the Smith family. You are in my prayers. I feel like I know all of you. Norma and I met at UMI over 40 years ago. Over the years we shared our family stories. I was always eager to hear about the latest happenings, pursuits, and adventures. I was just texting with Norma on January 4th. We talked about meeting “for a long visit at Nick’s”. She mentioned that she had been under the weather but was going to venture out to play bridge later that day. To hear of her passing was very unexpected. I am very fortunate to have known her and grateful that she called me her friend.

Kathy Staebler (Kat) - January 10, 2024 at 12:29 AM

JU

Hi Kat, This is Julie Norma's daughter. You were on my list to reach out to. You were such a great friend to Mom, she had told me that you were trying to connect after the holidays. Please email me your contact information at mcelmurryjulie@gmail.com.

Julie - January 10, 2024 at 07:36 AM

LS

“ I worked with Norma at UMI. I always loved how she called her married life as her previous life.

Linda Sayers - January 09, 2024 at 09:16 PM

BN

“ Norma will be missed I was privileged to work with her for several years at U. m. I. On zeeb rd.

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bill neely - January 09, 2024 at 03:34 PM

NC

“ Norma was such an avid participant at Saline Area Senior Center (SASC). I will miss seeing her in our halls. Love and light to all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

Nancy Cowan - January 09, 2024 at 12:37 PM

NR

“ Norma and I shared a love for the labyrinth. She tried to promote the one in Saline, as well as I did. It was a very special place for us. Walk in Peace Norma.

Nancy Rhodes - January 09, 2024 at 10:43 AM

GH

“ *My prayers and condolences to Norma's family. Norma was a good bridge player and I will miss you as a partner...Gerry Hale*

Gerry Hale - January 09, 2024 at 10:15 AM

JM

Thank you Gerry! Bridge was her passion and she enjoyed her weekly games so much!

Julie McElmurry - January 14, 2024 at 10:47 AM

DK

“ As one of the “Virgos” who met while working at UMI and continued a friendship for 40 years, I saw a deeply engaged, giving, intelligent woman live a wise life.

Norma loved her garden and saw the beauty. Norma acknowledged life’s disappointments but always kept faith in the good. She so loved all of the Smith children and was so proud of them as good human beings. She did the work of giving to her community and being a worthy world citizen.

What a woman! What an amazing life!

She was so caring, always asking about my family and interested in what was new in my business. She was just that way ... with everyone!

It is shocking she is gone, but I celebrate Norma, our dear “Virgo Norma” ... a beautiful soul and light for living.

Hugs to all of Norma’s children, their spouses and children. Over the years, the Virgos learned so many beautiful things about you. May your memories always keep her close.

Virgo Donna

Amelia Island, Florida

Donna Oaz Kaufman - January 08, 2024 at 08:25 PM

JM

Donna and all you Virgos! Your love and support for our mom and all of us has really made a difference! You are cherished friends and we are so grateful! Love you! Julie

Julie McElmurry - January 08, 2024 at 11:04 PM

JG

“ My heartfelt sympathies for the Norma Smith Family. I have many fond memories with your mom - playing bridge, line dancing, and even a brief stint at belly dancing. We laughed a lot, and I will miss her.

Jan Geer

Jan Geer - January 08, 2024 at 12:23 PM

KJ

Julie, what a beautiful memorial to your mom, it brought tears to my eyes, made me smile and filled my heart. Huge hugs and condolences to your entire family. Love, Karen

Karen Juhre - January 08, 2024 at 08:23 PM

JM

Thank you Karen! Love and miss you! Julie

Julie McElmurry - January 08, 2024 at 11:05 PM

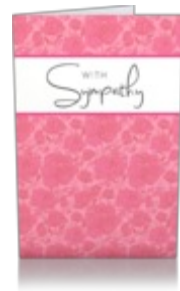
JM

Thank you Jan! Your friendship with Mom made a difference! 💕

Julie McElmurry - January 08, 2024 at 11:06 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Norma Dorothy Smith.



January 08, 2024 at 10:16 AM