



The Family Chain

*If love could have saved you -
You would not have died.
If tears could bring you back
You'd be by our side.*

*It broke our hearts to lose you,
But you did not go alone;
For part of us went with you
The day God called you home.*

*God takes us one by one
And breaks the family chain.
But somewhere in a better land
Our chain will link again.*

In Loving Memory

Donna Elaine Walters Lawson

*“Wanbli Gleska Luta Win”
(Red Spotted Eagle Woman)*

June 16, 1958
Old Agency, South Dakota

May 15, 2023
Pierre, South Dakota

FUNERAL SERVICE:

10:00 a.m., Wednesday, May 24, 2023
St. John's Episcopal Church
Eagle Butte, South Dakota

OFFICIATING:

Mother Ellen Huber

CASKET BEARERS:

Donna's Son, Nephews, and Brothers

HONORARY CASKET BEARERS:

*Marie Long, Marissa Mathews
Pastor Cheryl, Quilting Club Friends
Avera St. Mary's Hospital Staff
Avera St. Mary's Cancer Institute Staff
Sioux Falls Cancer Institute Staff
Avera@Home Hospice
All of Donna's Relatives and Friends*

MUSIC:

*Susie Payne
Janal Biegler*

INTERMENT:

*Timber Lake Cemetery
Timber Lake, South Dakota*

Donna E. Walters-Lawson (Wanbli Gleska Luta Win) was born June 16, 1958, at Old Cheyenne Agency, South Dakota to Joseph and Betty Walters. She was the oldest twin born that day. Donna grew up in Promise, South Dakota with all of her siblings.

She attended high school in Timber Lake, South Dakota where she ran track and was on the drill team. She graduated high school in 1977.

In September of 1977 she married Marlon Swimmer. There were two children born to this union, her daughter Barbie and son Jimmy (Marlon).

Donna raised her family in Timber Lake for some time. To help support the family she took in sewing work, patching pants for many locals and sewing quilts for loved ones. Donna also hand-quilted star quilts deep into the night.

In 1990 Donna moved her family to Pierre. There she met her hunka sister, Debbie Rencountre, and gained many more relatives through her hunka father/mother Whitney and Thelma from Crow Creek. She took pride in the loving relationship she had with all the siblings she gained through this family.

1990 was also the year she entered the powwow circle; she started as a jingle dress dancer and later a well-known traditional dancer and danced all of the United States. Donna spent a lot of time making regalia for young people. After a night of sewing or making bustles her children would find her sleeping in the middle of the floor in her living room, surrounded by thread, scraps of material and fringe. There would be newly finished outfits hanging on the closet door. She took pride in her sewing. Donna was also an avid beader who could bead the daintiest things and the biggest of items of regalia. She beaded moccasins, leggings, fancy dance capes, and she even made crowns.

When Donna lived in Hawaii and Georgia, she began making pageant dresses for little girls who wore them with pride on the pageant circuit. She made wedding dresses, bridesmaid dresses, homemade ribbon shirts for new brothers she picked up throughout her life.

Donna lived in Thoreau, NM with her daughter and family when her health turned. She spent time teaching her granddaughters to bead. She took walks with all her takoja's and spent time picnicking under the cedar trees. She learned a lot about Eastern Navajo Nation. She made even more relatives there that loved and respected her.

She later met and married Mark Lawson of Texas. Together they made a home there. They made frequent trips to Thoreau to see the Takoja's and even helped in the community in one way or another. There is an annual social powwow at Thoreau Community Center. One year Donna and Mark came to Thoreau with 107 backpacks full of school supplies. The backpacks were given out to the children in the community. Donna forgot her regalia, so she whipped up a ribbon dress to wear and dance in.

Donna and Mark moved back to Pierre in 2022 due to Donna's health and her wish to be closer to her family.

Donna was surrounded by her son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, siblings, and family when Creator took her home. She had a heart of gold and was a very talented woman. She will be missed by all who loved her.

Donna is survived by her husband, Mark Lawson of Pierre, SD; sister/friend, Marie Long of Pierre; daughter, Barbie Swimmer-Jim of Thoreau, NM; son, Marlon Swimmer (Jessica) of Omaha, NE; grandchildren: Damarco Jim (Samantha), Allura Swimmer (Josh), Viviana Swimmer, Derrick Jim Jr., Madeline Jim, Celia Jim, Maxson Jim and Chenoa Mariano-Jim all of Thoreau, NM, Antwan Swimmer of Polacca, AZ, Samuel Swimmer, Kiana Swimmer, Marlon Swimmer Jr., Michelle Mowa, Duane Mowa, Mikayla Swimmer and Brayden Swimmer from Omaha ,NE; great-granddaughter, Layla Jim; siblings: Gale, Jody, Dianna, Judy, Connie, Robert, Scott, Richard, Kimberly, Michael and Melissa; numerous nieces and nephews; hunka family: The Whitney Rencountre Family from Crow Creek, James and Maureen Cadwell of Hermosa, SD, and Connie Williams of Farmington, NM

She is preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Betty Walters; paternal grandparents, Willard and Amy Walters; maternal grandparents, George and Rose Sydow; and numerous aunts and uncles.

