

Mary Ann (Stover) Black Bird, 75, of Eagle Butte, passed away Thursday, September 4, 2025, at Mayo Clinic Hospital, Rochester, MN.



She was born on August 26, 1950, in Hot Springs to Oliver and Evelyn (Hungry) Stover. She was the first born of seven siblings, three brothers and four sisters. Mary was so cherished that it was told that for the first year her feet never touched the ground. She attended elementary school in Allen, Loneman Day School, Our Lady of Lourdes and high school at Oglala Community School in Pine Ridge as well as Holy Rosary. She obtained her GED and later attended USD and OLC.

On April 4, 1967, Mary welcomed her daughter, Becky, and shared raising her with her parents and siblings. Mary and Becky were alike in many ways, especially in their shared commitment to the Lakota way of life and the Sundance circle. When Mary danced her first year, Becky danced beside her, having danced for several years before and wanting to support her mom.

Mary experienced several chapters in her life before finding lasting love with Ronnie Black Bird, whom she met at a powwow in Rapid in 1989 when he helped fix a flat tire. They built a life together from that moment on and were formally married in 2002, sharing countless adventures, laughter, and devotion through the years.



Mary dedicated her life to serving Tribal families and communities in many roles. She began as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer in Pine Ridge, later working as a dispatcher for the OST Tribal Police Department and a

Family Court Representative. After moving to Cheyenne River, she supported mothers and children through Healthy Start and, as a GED tutor in Eagle Butte, helped achieve a record number of graduates that year. She also worked with the Four Bands Community Fund and trained many childhood care providers through Presentation College. Mary completed her career as Data Coordinator with Tribal Ventures, continuing her lifelong commitment to strengthening families and communities.

Mary and her husband, Ronnie, joined a Cheyenne River group volunteering with Habitat for Humanity in Winnipeg, helping build 16 homes in one week. They visited with President Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter and helped bring the 1994 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project to Cheyenne River — the first Habitat blitz build on a Native American reservation.



Mary began her spiritual and healing journey in the late 1980s at the Medicine Horse Sundance in Evergreen, South Dakota. From then on, she lived her life according to the Canku Luta and became a loving mentor and teacher to many, especially women and young girls interested in learning the Lakota way of life. In 1993, Mary embraced the role of Sundance leader's wife, supporting Ronnie's dream as they dedicated their lives to the Rattling Hail Sundance, giving their time, energy, and hearts for the people. Through the Rattling Hail Sundance, they helped secure a grant that, over the last five years, has supported nearly 40 families in the Pine Ridge, Fort Thompson, Standing Rock, and Cheyenne River communities, providing resources for elders raising their grandchildren.

Mary was humble and genuine, a direct communicator. She had a kind heart, easy laugh and welcoming spirit that made everyone feel at home.



She is survived by her husband, Ronnie Black Bird; her only daughter, Becky Red Bow Covey, Rapid City; three stepchildren, Ron Black Bird Jr.

(Krissy) Swiftbird, SD, Daniel Black Bird (Doneen) LaPlant, SD, and Alana Traversie (Daniel) Pierre, SD; grandchildren, Tony Stover, Oliver Covey, Kylie Rose, Jamerson, Ashanti, Daniel Jr., Jace, Lacy, Cecil, Rylan, Ramsey, Rhawni Jo, Bella, Tremaine, Alli and Adonis; great-grandchildren, Audrea Rose, Phoenix, Enzo; brother, James Tim Stover of El Paso, TX; sisters, Bernadette Stover of Hot Springs, SD, Gina Veo (Terry), Donna Stover, and Kathy Stover of Kyle, SD; sister-in-law, Alita Pfeifle, Aurora, MO; nephews: Tim, Jesse, Patrick, Paul, Mike, Jimmy, Jason, Junior, Shane, Sam, Ed, Corey, Clayton, Ezrah, Waylon; nieces: Malita, Naomi, Denise, Jennifer, Annie, Emma, Estee, Nikki, Dedria, McKenzie, Whisper, Tiffany, Chevelle, Shannon, Sonja Ann, Sara, Mariah, Lillian, Gwen; as well as extended family and many hunka relatives.



Mary was preceded in death by her parents, Oliver W. and Evelyn (Hungry) Stover; paternal grandparents, Edward and Susie (Swallow) Stover and maternal grandmother, Nellie Hungry; brothers, Bill and Russ Stover; nieces: Quintina Stover, Beth Red Feather, Diane Hawk Eagle, and Cynthia Friedman; nephews: Arlen Stover, James Dawson (JD) Stover, Cody Hamilton, Jaylen Veo, Edward "Numpa" Red Feather, Arvol Jr. White Eyes, Chris Black Bird, and Daryl Hawk Eagle.

HONORARY CASKET BEARERS:

Angie Stover & Family, Robert Stover Sr., Johnny Stover Family, Eddie Stover Family, Ears Roulliard & Family, Desersa Family, Melvin & Tudy Swallow & Family, Poorman Family, Georgia Raye Stover & Family, Dottie American Horse & Family, Beverly Hendrix & Family, Dennis Stover & Family, Mike Spider & Family, Louise Spider & Family, Delaney Apple & Family, Heather Allen, Darlene McBride, Stephanie Ramero, Tom & Michelle Allen, Jean Walking Eagle Kauffman, Terry Albers, Jains Family, Sierra Family, White Family, Sydnee Twiss, Marvie and Ronnie Ferguson, Myreen Iron Cloud, Dawn Iron Cloud, StarDust Red Bow, Barb Hamilton, Rick & Ethleen Two Dogs, Shannon Black Bird & Family, Jim Meeter & Family, Ella Meeter, Iva Stover, Suzanne Kite, Arlene Black Bird, Crystal St John & Family, Deanna & Richard Marshall, Collins Provost Family, Erin Provost Family, Karlene Hunter & Family, Steph & Ivan Sorbel Family, Sandy Janis & Family, Mike & Whisper Catches Enemy & Family, Ann-erika White Bird, Carol Simms, Gerald Sherman, Vicky Sherman, Emily Bull Bear, Bat & Pattie Pourier, Alberta Iron Cloud-Miller, Elsie Meeks, Mary Bordeaux, Debbie & Chris Bordeaux, Clementine Bordeaux, Nate Bordeaux, Austin Bordeaux, Diane DuBray, Donita & Earp Fischer Family, Amanda & Brice Walters, Courtney & Jarrid Claussen Family, Ross DuBray, Eileen Briggs, Heather Sobrepena & Family, Bob and Kathy Walters, Terry and Wendy O'Neil, Les Ducheneaux, Kermit Frazier, Miles Frazier, Kyle Frazier, Simon Frazier & Family, Emmitt Thompson, Jackie Archambault, Mabel Granados, Lynn LeCompte, Tanya Fiddler, Randolph Runs After, Mona Dunsmore, Aude Chesnais, DD Nelson, Kyle & Marne Schierbeck, George Farrell, Bradley Smith and Lacey Stevenson-Warrior, Mark Colman, Ixtli White Hawk, Mila Tang, Brenda and Rob Suddenbrave, Kristi Leora, Tammy Green, Josh Wabunasee, Al Nygard, Fred & Michelle DuBray & Elsie, Tracey & Cameron Zephier, Onna LeBeau, Heath Duchenau & Family, Tom & Eddie Eagle Staff, Mike Jewett, Marcy Lesmeister, Cathy Simon, Peggy & Dick Gallipo, Paul Thomas, Tim Chandler, Bill Ratliff. All Medicine Horse Sundancers (1989 - 1993) and Rattling Hail Sundancers, helpers, singers, and supporters.

Our heartfelt apology if we have failed to name you. There are many people Mary was close to over the years and many she took as relatives, and she carried the knowledge of those connections and in her book which was lost in a fire. Please share with us if we have missed someone — we want to know and continue to carry those connections forward.

Prayer

Tunkāšila wopila yelo

Anpetu kī le wakan yelo

Mitakuye ob mazani kte lo

Wopila yelo

Grandfather, immeasurable thanks

This sacred day

The health you bring to the relatives

Immeasurable thanks

In Loving Memory

Mary Ann Black Bird ***"Mato Ska Omani Win"*** ***(White Bear Walking Woman)***

August 26, 1950 September 4, 2025
Hot Springs, South Dakota Rochester, Minnesota

WAKE SERVICE:

6:00 p.m., Thursday, September 11, 2025
Landmark Hall - Eagle Butte, South Dakota

OFFICIATING:

Mike Catches Enemy

CASKET BEARERS:

Ron Black Bird Jr., Myles Frazier, Corey Stover,
Mike Stover, Treyton Fischer, and Ross DuBray

DRUM GROUP: Wakinyan Maza

FUNERAL SERVICE:

2:00 p.m., Friday, September 12, 2025
Our Lady of Sorrows Hall - Kyle, South Dakota

OFFICIATING: James Meeter

CASKET BEARERS:

Mary's Nephews

DRUM GROUP:

Creekside Singers

BURIAL:

Stover Family Cemetery
Kyle, South Dakota



Gettysburg, South Dakota
www.familyfuneralhome.net

In Loving Memory



Mary Ann Black Bird
"Mato Ska Omani Win"
(White Bear Walking Woman)