



*In Loving Memory*  
**Marisa Joelle Benoist**  
*“Wakanyeya Ohowic’akila Win”*  
*(Loves Children As Her Own)*

November 18, 1981  
 Rapid City, South Dakota

February 1, 2026  
 Eagle Butte, South Dakota



**I'M FREE**

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,  
 I'm following the path God has laid for me.  
 I took His hand when I heard His call,  
 I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day  
 To laugh, to love, to work or play.  
 Tasks left undone must stay that way.  
 I found peace at the close of the day.

If my parting has left a void,  
 Then fill it with remembered joy.  
 A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
 Oh yes, these things I too will miss.

Be not burdened with time of sorrow.  
 For I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.  
 My life has been full, I savored much,  
 Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,  
 Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.  
 Lift up your hearts, and peace to thee,  
 God wanted me now so **HE SET ME FREE.**



**WAKE SERVICE:**

7:00 p.m., Sunday, February 15, 2026  
 CRST Bingo Hall  
 Eagle Butte, South Dakota

**FUNERAL SERVICE:**

11:00 a.m., Monday, February 16, 2026  
 CRST Bingo Hall  
 Eagle Butte, South Dakota

**OFFICIATING:**

Doug Wilkinson, Helene Circle Eagle, Shirley Dog Eagle

**CASKET BEARERS:**

Braylan Benoist, Coen Benoist, Takoda Nienhuser,  
 Jason Moran, Jared Moran, Efton Dog Eagle, Conroy Clown,  
 Jared Peneaux, Ryan Marrowbone, Joseph Condon,  
 John Noisy Hawk, Derek Yellow Owl Sr., Rocklin Smith,  
 Kelyn Ward, Leon Brown Otter III, and Hinzi Vance

**DRUMS:**

Old Bull Singers and Bad Bear Drum Group

**UCC SONG SERVICE:**

Palani Wakpa

**INTERMENT:**

Eagle Butte Cemetery  
 Eagle Butte, South Dakota

*Luce*  
 FUNERAL HOME

Ph. (605) 964-3614

Gettysburg, South Dakota

www.familyfuneralhome.net

**Marisa Joelle Benoist** was born November 18, 1981, in Rapid City, SD, to Cordelia (Flying By) and Russell Benoist, she was the youngest of seven children. She passed away on Sunday, February 01, 2026, at her home in Eagle Butte.

Marisa was primarily raised in Eagle Butte, SD, but always referred to the west end & the Cherry Creek, SD community, as home. Marisa came into this world a 13-pound baby girl of the Benoist family and from the time she was little, proved herself to be the "Boss" of everyone. She always had a strong determination, no matter what was going on, that she would be involved and would see that things got done. Her way.

Marisa attended Cheyenne River Head Start, she would have her hair fixed and braided every morning and taken to school, where she was most likely also the boss. Her Head Start classmates became her lifelong friends and she just loved her teacher, Doris Wolfe, and other staff, one of which was her Auntie Rita Kym Louis, who she remained close with all her life. Once you met our Marisa, she became your friend and she would remember and recognize you no matter where she saw you. She was such a little socialite, and the family would not have had it any other way. There are so many "Marisa Stories," that can be told.

Growing up, she traveled to many places with her Mom & Dad and brother Leland, they were often off on a sight-seeing trip somewhere, lots of times to other states. She enjoyed keeping in touch and visiting with friends and relatives. If there was ever someone that would keep track of you and check up on you periodically, it was Marisa. She loved family gatherings and hanging out with her friends, going for drives and listening to music. Russell and Cordelia moved to the Takini community for a short time and Marisa graduated from the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade at Takini School. They then moved back to Eagle Butte, and she graduated at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School Class of 2000.

Marisa was also known to friends & family as Marisa, Mariss, Risa, Riss and affectionately to friends she grew up with, as Big Sexy, a nickname that just stuck with her most of her life. But the names the Benoist family and others knew her as the most, was "Auntie Risa" or "TT Riss". She had taken care of all her nieces and nephews and helped raise them from infancy until they started school and even after that, she was a good one at bathing the kids, making bottles, changing diapers, feeding them, playing with them, and just loving them. They all loved her so much. From the time she was just a little girl she always had a doll on her hip. As she grew older and was acquiring more nieces & nephews to love and care for, children replaced the dolls she carried around, and she carried many, many children in her lifetime. It wasn't a babysitting job to her, it was pure love and affection that she showed to all the children she took care of. There are many, many parents that can attest to her being the caregiver of their children and the love and affection she had for each and every one of them. Her sister asked her one time if she remembered all the kids she had ever taken care of and she answered yes, all of them, and always said she would write down a list just to see. That list would have been pretty long had she done it. Being with Marc & Alissa a lot, she became a faithful Boston Red Sox fan, she pretty much had no choice as they watched a lot of Red Sox games. She was also a fan of the UNC Tarheels and and her NBA team was the Phoenix Suns. Marisa has been given the Lakota name, "Wakanyeya Ohowic'akila Win" which translates to "Loves Children As Her Own."

She loved children so very much and she became the happiest mother-to-be, anxiously awaiting the birth of her own child. The family was excited, everyone was excited, because it was something that would bring her so much happiness, she was really looking forward to having her baby. Marisa's baby girl, Adalei Jase Blue Thunder, was born on July 16, 2015, however, Adalei was born sleeping. This really devastated her, it was hard for her to lose her baby girl, but she was a strong woman, she kept her faith as she kept Adalei's memory alive. For a whole year after she lost her Adalei, as she mourned her baby, her and the family collected and saved star quilts and giveaway items and had a memorial dinner to honor the little girl she had lost. She is with her Adalei now and we just know she is the best Mommy.

Marisa was the Godmother to Breeanne Benoist, Fanny Thompson, Dionne Red Dog, Alva Benoist and Millard Dupris. Raymond Clown has also been a special person in her life ever since he was little, she had nicknamed him, "Spidey."

After high school Marisa was mainly a caregiver for children, she did some substitute teaching at the CEB school, after that she worked at the Mni Mart convenience store in Eagle Butte, SD. She also worked at the Co-op Ampride gas station for a little while. She was friendly and helpful to everyone she worked with as well as the patrons of the businesses. She liked to tease and joke; she was quick witted and could come back with a response real fast if you ever teased her. Marisa was the current Manager of the Cheyenne River Motel at the time of her sudden death. She loved her job there, she was a determined woman, she had compassion for those she worked with and for, she was able to make firm decisions in all aspects of the motel operations and its revenue, and she worked to bring credit to CREDCO and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. She personally loved all the employees she worked with; they were like family to her. Marisa was a very respectful person even in difficult situations.

Marisa is survived by her Dad, Russell Benoist; her brothers & sisters-in-law, Allen & Lisa, Marc & Alissa, Nathan, and Leland; and her sisters, Michelle and Melanie. Also surviving are her nieces and nephews; Megan, Kyanne, Ettie, Deon, Nate, Breeanne & Jocelyn, Leona, Braylan, Quinn, Coen, Jason & Jared, Kelyn, Mason, Neveah, MaeBelle, Luka, Baby Cordelia, Alva Joelle, Tavery, Travis & Millard. Her takoja's; Tynan, Xavier & Zoey, Lennox, Buck Russell, Rocklin & Rozlynn, Jersey, Calica, Josiah & Zoey, Dredon, Covy, Conor, Emelena, Jaslene, Jared Jr & Taurean, Sekani, Blake, Carson, Blaine & Bianca. Surviving also are her Grandma's, Betty Handley and Clarice Miner and Grandparents, Vern & Mazie Shelton, and a very special stepdaughter that she loved very much, Dayja Dayne Little Shield.

Preceding her in death were her baby girl Adalei, mother, Cordelia, nephew, Clay Jon, grandparents, Douglas Benoist, Ellen Ward, Reverend Moses & Leona Flying By, Uncles, Chet Condon, Wilbur Flying By Sr. Russell Flying By, Byron & Myron Flying By, Aunts, Faye Condon, Menoda Flying By & Charlene Flying By, Sister-In-Law, Angie, Cousins, Wilbur Flying By Jr. & Lisa Condon, Niece & Nephew: Condelaria Peralta and Cameron W. Condon, and special friends, Marcus Little Shield, Trent Peneaux.



*In Loving Memory*



*Marisa Benoist*

*1981 - 2026*

