

In Loving Memory Of
Karen Ducheneaux Nitzschke

October 28, 1941
Old Agency, South Dakota

January 21, 2018
Cheyenne River Reservation

REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

11:00 a.m., Saturday, January 27, 2018
Ducheneaux Chapel ~ Swiftbird, South Dakota

EULOGIST

Tasina Nitzschke

CASKET BEARERS

Dylan Nihiser, Burt Dillabaugh, Zachary Ducheneaux,
Guthrie Ducheneaux, Wayne Ducheneaux, Jr.,
Bud Ducheneaux, Jamie Ducheneaux, and Luke Black Elk

HONORARY CASKET BEARERS

Owen LeBeau, DeAnna LeBeau, Allen Ducheneaux,
Wade Ducheneaux, Henry Ducheneaux, Marsha Vrooman,
Laura Brewer, Lori Ducheneaux, Colette Ducheneaux,
Kelsey Ducheneaux, Katie Ducheneaux, Kim Ducheneaux,
Tate Ducheneaux, Catlin Woods, Sage Woods,
Karen Ellen Ducheneaux, Charlie Anne Frost, Sammi Dupree,
Sam Dupree, Marlene Bowker, Sebastian LeBeau,
Randy Racek, Monica Myott, and Thomas Larsen

DRUM GROUP

Ducheneaux Family Drum Group

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

"Piano Concerto No. 5" ~ Beethoven
"I Love You Because" ~ Jim Reeves

INTERMENT

Ducheneaux Family Cemetery ~ Swiftbird, South Dakota

BEAUTY

You asked me once
What beauty was
And where it might be found.
I professed to know
And told you so
With words I thought quite sound,
"The senses each
Transmit their reach
And picture in our mind
The good, the bad,
The sometimes sad,
But views of every kind.
"Pleasant views," I said,
Are beauty's stead
When everything's just right."
This all is true,
But nothing new –
Just logic clear and bright.

But ask me now
What beauty is
And this I'll say to you,
"The touch of your heart,
Though miles apart,
Is beauty soft and new.
The sound of your smile
As it speaks to beguile
Is beauty loud in my mind.
The sight of your care
In visions we share
Is beauty warm and kind."
So Alas!
The logic once known
Has suddenly flown
Since meeting the likes of you.
The price I demand
Is holding your hand
And seeking all beauty anew.

Elmer T. Nitzschke - 1979



Gettysburg, South Dakota
www.familyfuneralhome.net

Karen Rae Ducheneaux Nitzschke was born on October 28, 1941 to Frank and Ellen "Babe" (Claymore) Ducheneaux at the Old Cheyenne River Agency. She was the seventh of their eleven children. Her siblings were Joan (LeBeau), Henry "Bud", John, Wayne, Anthony "Claire", Franklin, Rochelle, Greg, Les, and Candace.

Karen grew up in various locations around the Cheyenne River Reservation such as the old house at Stove Creek and the Old Cheyenne River Agency when her parents moved to town. She attended the Cheyenne River Boarding School, St. Joseph Indian School, and eventually graduated from Cheyenne River High School in 1959. Karen began her college career at the University of Minnesota and finished at the University of South Dakota, graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science in 1969.

After graduating from college, Karen moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked at a variety of places, including the American Indian Press Association (now the Native American Journalist Association), of which she was a founding member. She also worked on Capitol Hill, including as an aide with the Senate Special Committee on Indian Education, chaired by Senator Teddy Kennedy. She also co-authored a book on the loss of Indian land, entitled "100 Million Acres."

Karen gave birth to her only child, Tasina, on September 8, 1972 in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. After the birth of her daughter, she moved back to Washington D.C. and eventually started working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, first as a Special Aide to Commissioner Morrie Thompson and later with the BIA Division of Tribal Government. She transferred to Phoenix, AZ in 1974 and continued her career at the BIA. In 1979, Karen met Elmer T. Nitzschke, Jr. She transferred to Minneapolis, MN to live with Elmer and they married on May 3, 1980. Karen ended her full-time professional career in 1983 when the family moved to Rapid City, SD. A major highlight of her professional career was fully defining the concept of the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the federal government. Karen spent the next ten years splitting her time between Rapid City and the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in the house built by her father.

For the remainder of her life, Karen lived on the Reservation and spent her time on the passions, projects, and intellectual pursuits that interested her. She took classes in archeology and went on digs around South Dakota. She, along with Elmer and his family, built the Frank D. Ducheneaux Memorial Chapel and Museum – including hand crafting the stained glass windows in the chapel. She worked for a few months as Public Defender for the tribe. She was hired to re-write and update the Tribal Constitution. She lovingly remodeled and tended to her home and property. She researched and wrote about the migration of ancient peoples from Asia into the Americas and the associated spread of those peoples and language groups across the continents. She researched and wrote about her ancestor, Crow Feather. She spent a lot of time with Elmer out on the Missouri River fishing and catching champion size walleye. She was an election official and had a passion for politics until the end.

One of the greatest joys of Karen's life was becoming a grandmother. Dylan Nihiser was born to Tasina on February 26, 1991. Karen spent hours playing with Dylan and watching him grow. She attended all the major milestones of his life including birthdays and basketball games, up to his high school graduation. Noah Nihiser was born to Tasina on April 2, 2003 and after the family moved to Pierre, Karen had the joy of having both grandsons near her.

When Elmer developed Alzheimer's disease she spent years tending to him at home the best she could until he eventually went into a nursing home. She also spent hours caring for her niece, Kathleen Dillabaugh, as she battled cancer. Her loving care and support during those difficult times were the hallmark of her great love and care for all of her family. She made a point to try to attend every wedding, graduation, and birthday party around the reservation for all her nieces and nephews and even their children.

Karen is survived by her daughter, Tasina, grandsons Dylan and Noah, brothers Franklin, Greg, and Les, sister Candace and many nieces and nephews including special nieces Carol Jean Morgan, Ashton Smith, Kyanne Dillabaugh, and Vicki Ducheneaux and special nephews Burt Dillabaugh, Zachary Ducheneaux, Guthrie Ducheneaux, and Jamie Ducheneaux. She succumbed to her eighteen month battle with lung cancer on January 21, 2018 in her home with Tasina and Dylan by her side.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Elmer, parents, Frank and Babe, brothers Bud, John, Wayne, and Clair, sisters Joan and Rochelle, very special niece Kathleen Dillabaugh, nieces Lisa Farlee and Allison Peterson, nephews Austin Anderson, Shawn Paul Smith, and Matthew Ducheneaux.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Frank D. Ducheneaux Memorial Chapel and Museum (Black Hills Federal Credit Union) or the Lisa Farlee Memorial Scholarship Fund (State Bank of Eagle Butte) are gratefully welcome.

In Loving Memory



Karen Ducheneaux Nitzschke

1941 - 2018