

Celebrating A Life

*"Always my mother;
forever my friend"*



*Madonna Jean
Blachford*

July 4, 1939 – March 20, 2020

Arrangements Entrusted To



*Miller, South Dakota
www.familyfuneralhome.net*

Madonna Jean Blachford, 80, of Miller, passed away peacefully on Friday, March 20, 2020, in her hometown of Miller, South Dakota.

Due to the current threat of the Covid-19 pandemic, immediate family will gather for a private funeral service. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Burial will be at G.A.R. Cemetery, Miller, S.D.

Madonna was born on July 4, 1939, to Herley and Doris (Reich) McCarl, who were farmers and teachers in south Hand County. She graduated from Miller High School with the Class of 1957 and then attended Huron College to build her knowledge of accounting and business administration.

On July 10, 1960, she married Sgt. Robert Blachford, following a courtship that started 21 years earlier in the nursery of the Miller hospital. The two were born 4 days apart. They raised two children: Lori and Corey.

Madonna's work life included jobs at the South Dakota State University Admissions Office in Brookings, South Dakota; Central Federal Savings and Loan in Rolla, Missouri; and State Bank of Bottineau in Bottineau, North Dakota. She also served as Deputy Auditor for Rolette County in Rolla, North Dakota.

But most of her life was spent in Miller. From 1968 to 1978, she and her husband Bob owned and operated Hand County Dairy, a deliver service for local homes and businesses, and a retail ice cream shop. Madonna also worked as a billing clerk at Hand County Memorial Hospital, as a bookkeeper at Lindsay Soft Water, as executive director of On Hand Development, and in the office at Mid-Dakota Rural Water.

Madonna loved to travel and visited places as far away as Switzerland, France, Bermuda, and the Netherlands. But her favorite vacation was camping with her family in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

She enjoyed gardening, growing both flowers and vegetables with ease, and she took particular joy in sharing what she grew with friends and neighbors. She had a special fondness for country music and a not-so-secret crush on Randy Travis. She loved to read, and you could find her books in every room of the house with bookmarks made of whatever was handy, an empty envelope, a drugstore receipt, a scrap of newspaper.

She loved her cup of coffee in the morning. She delighted in having family gathered around the table for a good meal and conversation. She was blessed to have so many family members close by to share holidays or just to stop by for a visit.

Madonna was a champion for people with disabilities, dedicated to ensuring local support for those in need. The Blachford House in Miller will stand as a lasting legacy to that effort by both she and Bob. Madonna's advocacy also included serving in Partners in Policy Making through Disability Rights South Dakota and on the board of Easter Seals.

She made many close friends and helped her community through her participation in the VFW Auxiliary, the Order of the Eastern Star, the Red Hat Society, and the community of the First Presbyterian Church of Miller.

Her deep devotion to her children and grandbabies, and her tireless work for those with disabilities, taught us all how to care about others and to never give up on the ideals -- and more importantly the people -- you believe in. Her kind spirit and can-do attitude will be greatly missed.

She is survived by: Her children Lori Blachford (Karen Utke) of Des Moines, Iowa, and Corey Blachford of Miller. Grandchildren Kyle Utke of Osaka, Japan, and Ryan Utke of Brooklyn, New York. Brother Terry (Georgia) McCarl of Plattsmouth, Nebraska. Brother-in-law Richard (Kathleen) Blachford of Newaygo, Michigan; sisters-in-law Bonnie Heinzman of Newaygo, and Vera Blachford of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Nieces and nephews Darren (Debbie) Blachford of Portage, Michigan; Whitney (Rodney) Smith of Dorr, Michigan; Libby (Ron) Tourte of Ankeny, Iowa; Monte (Anne) Blachford of Scottsdale, Arizona; Sean (Terri) Blachford, Blue Spring, Missouri; Morgan (Sonja) Heinzman of Newaygo; Kristi (DJ) Krayneski of Omaha, Nebraska; Shay (Tom) Frisbie of Newaygo; Geoanna McCarl of Plattsmouth, Nebraska; and Clayton (Constanza) McCarl of Jacksonville, Florida. 19 great-nieces and great-nephews and countless beloved family and friends.

Madonna was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Robert, brothers-in-law Darrell Heinzman and Dennis Blachford, and great-nephew Joe Tourte.

In lieu of flowers, please direct memorials to the Good Samaritan Society, 421 East 4th Street, Miller, S.D. 57362