

A Poem About My Grandmother

It's hard to know where to begin

Summing Janet Pekarek up in so few words feels like a sin

Spill on her carpet and you'd get the threat of a beating

New solo cups and wine glasses were not something she'd be needing

Grandma showed us that being educated oft has nothing to do with a degree

She could talk your ear off about news, politics, and of course family tea

She once scolded me for peeling a carrot - said I was wasting food

She taught me to be grateful for everything I have, and never to be rude

The woman could cook for forty without breaking a sweat

She made thanksgiving dressing as good as it gets

You'd fear for your life if you futzed with the AC

Get her chatting about the weather and good lord you may never be free

Grandma survived so much: cancer, great loss, even the occasional heart attack

But despite it all she kept her biting wit, and the inclinations of a pyromaniac

She spent most of her years raising all manner of living things

Kids, crops, and animals, all a farm brings

But her greatest strength was caring for the ones she loved

She was kind, generous, decent, a granny sent from above

No doubt she's in heaven donned in all denim apparel

Gleefully chucking things into the burn barrel.



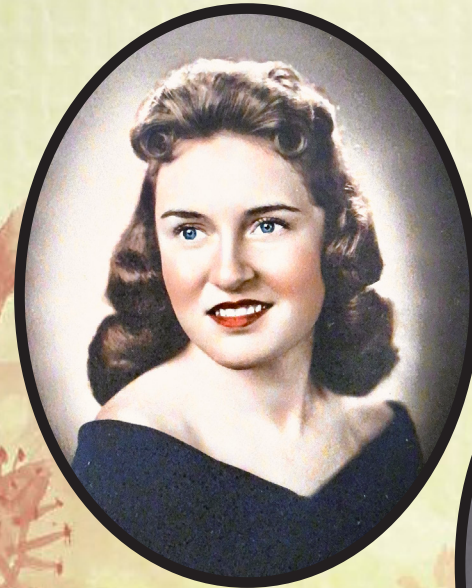
Luce, Luce & Reck
FUNERAL HOMES

Highmore, South Dakota
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In Memory Of

Janet Pekarek

February 23, 1941 - December 18, 2025



Janet Pekarek, 84, of Highmore, passed away Thursday, December 18, 2025, at Highmore Health, surrounded by loved ones.

If people would like to make a donation in her honor, please send to Highmore Health Care, who did a wonderful job taking care of her during her last month. The family would also like to acknowledge gratitude for the compassionate care from the Avera Hospice team and Kore Care.

She was born on February 23, 1941, in Miller, SD, to Carl and Elizabeth Hardes. She grew up on the family farm along with her siblings, where one of her jobs, when not outside, was to bake bread. A talent that carried on to feed many of her grandkids. Janet attended Polo through High School, where she was Valedictorian and showed her talent for writing by winning multiple essay contests. She then continued her education at Mount Marty College for one year and acquired many memories and friends that she kept in touch with over the years.

On November 26, 1960, she married a charming young man with a mischievous smile, Ronald Pekarek. Janet and Ronnie moved to Ronnie's birth home in Southern Hyde County, staying there for the duration of their lives. They worked as a team, always known by Janet and Ronnie by the many nieces and nephews they would routinely host during the summer – very much like an unofficial summer camp.

While raising six kids with eight motorcycles and one helmet – she was routinely thankful for the guardian angels she claimed kept us alive. Janet rode horses rounding up cattle, drove truck during silage runs, or even when hauling hay across state lines when none grew on the farm – whatever it took – she was game to do what she could to keep the venture moving forward. Janet took the helm of the side hustle of raising pedigree dogs, which rumor has it bought the farm a tractor. Janet bravely faced cancer twice in her early forties, confirming her spirit and resiliency. Shortly after her cancer remission, the addition of grandchildren revived her purpose and spark for life. Accruing 19 grandkids, she assumed the role of Gramma with ease, decorating many an angel food cake, making playdoh, embracing the “Knidel” playhouse, and taking extra kids home from church to treat with banana shakes and popcorn.

She continued to be overjoyed by her eight great-grandchildren, including her treasured “roomie”, Brystol, for the last few years of her life. Janet was very proud of her children and looked forward to the weekly phone calls and updates to talk about politics and current events with her boys, that lived out of state. She enjoyed the outdoors by gardening, mowing, and, for some reason, “trash burning” was somehow cathartic and pursued at every opportunity. She often stated that she was a “sun worshiper” which was ever apparent in her tropical themed thermostat. Janet was strong in her faith and was a member of the Immaculate Conception of Stephan and Highmore Parish.

She was well noted for her independence, quick wit, sarcastic humor, and non-conformist ways that stayed with her to the very end and will live on through her children and grandchildren. She remained steadfast in her beliefs through one more cancer surgery and multiple heart stents. Janet continuously stood up for the underdogs, reminding us to be compassionate to those in need. We all will miss the family get togethers that she so enjoyed, the ongoing commentary about the crops, the updates about Jason's and the farm's productivity log, and the visits of nieces and nephews who appreciated her hospitality in their memories of days on the farm.

She is survived by her children: Brian Pekarek with wife Donna and children: Brandon and Marissa (Jeff) Weinfeld; Scott Pekarek with wife Rosemary and children: Rachel Pekarek (Jimmy Hartman), Sarah, Megan (Evan) Fischer, and Hannah; Curt Pekarek with children: Alexis and Lucas; Jill Cowan with husband Tigh and children: Pat (Brittini), Breelyn, Hayden (Alyssa), Logan (Jared) Fodness, Telson, and Trake; Joe Pekarek with wife Kristin and children: Jake and Zack; and Jason Pekarek with wife Joey and children: Taylor Pekarek (Gabe Ware) and Matthew (Jami). Her clan of great grandchildren includes Kenna, Karson, Tigh, Coye, Brystol, Rory, Taron, Maeve, Pierce and Milo.

Janet was preceded in death by her husband, Ronald Pekarek; her parents, Carl and Elizabeth Hardes; her in-laws, Theresa and Joe Pekarek; her siblings Dick, Dale & Marilyn; her daughter-in-law, Suzie Pekarek; and beloved granddaughter, Nicole Pekarek.



Celebrating the Life of

JANET PEKAREK

FEBRUARY 23, 1941
MILLER, SOUTH DAKOTA

DECEMBER 18, 2025
HIGHMORE, SOUTH DAKOTA

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

11:00 a.m., Saturday, July 25, 2026
Immaculate Conception Church
Stephan, South Dakota

*The family warmly invites you to join them following
the service for a luncheon and continued
fellowship at the church.*