



Mary-Louise Lewis

JUL 15, 1936 - APR 14, 2024



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Mary-Louise Lewis

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Mary-Louise Lewis, the daughter of Norman and Irene (Luebke) Blanchette, passed away on Sunday morning, April 14th, 2024, from complications of heart failure.

Known to family and friends as Mary Lou, she was born on July 15, 1936, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. She grew up in Oshkosh. In her high school art class, she was one of two people who learned how to construct and paint stage flats. That led to a lifelong love of the theatre.

The teacher who taught her was also involved in stage makeup, which she also learned from him. She graduated from Oshkosh High School in 1954. Afterward, she attended college at Wisconsin State College-Oshkosh, as it was known then.

She worked at Miles Kimball, then the telephone company, and then returned to Miles Kimball!

Mary Lou married future school teacher Richard R. Lewis on January 14, 1959, at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey; and they spent a year in Germany while he was in the Army. After returning to Oshkosh, she worked at Christensen's Lingerie.

In 1962, she became associated with the Miss America Organization at the local level. She produced and directed the Miss Oshkosh pageant for six years. Mary Lou went to the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey for the first time in 1965 with that year's Miss Wisconsin, Sharon Mae Singstock of Oshkosh, who placed as fourth runner-up, as well as in 1972 when Terry Anne Meeuwsen of DePere was crowned Miss America of 1973.

She continued her association with Miss America for over 50 years, including judging at many other state pageants. She was honored on stage at the national pageant in Las Vegas, Nevada for her volunteer service in January 2012, when, coincidentally, our second Miss Wisconsin, Laura Marie Kaeppler of Kenosha, was crowned Miss America. After the pageant moved back to Atlantic City, she attended for two more years, in 2013 and 2014.



Obituary

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Mary Lou was responsible for the tickets for the Miss Wisconsin pageant shows at Oshkosh West High School each June for many, many years. She was also in charge of the ushers for the Miss Wisconsin shows.

Another interest was the Oshkosh-based Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) B-17 tours, which her husband, Richard, travelled with. They also frequently volunteered with the B-17 during EAA AirVenture.

More recently, she has been a supporter of The Grand Theatre, here in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. She was a member of the '54 Club, EAA, and The Grand.

Mary Lou is survived by her younger brother, Ralph (Elaine) of Madison, Wis.; Ralph's children, Thaddeus (Ana) Blanchette of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Vanessa, Vanessa's daughter, Janie Rose; Christen Stumpner, Christen's children, Rose, Keegan, and Stuart.

Additionally, she is survived by a sister-in-law, Jackie Gutsmedl, Jackie's children, Gloria, Mark, and Bruce; and the children of Richard's sister, Sally Frank, Michael Frank and Stacey Gautsch. Mary Lou is also survived by other nieces and nephews, cousins, many friends (especially Sylvia Karow, Deb McHugh, John McHugh, Janine McHugh, Sandra Butcher, and anyone else we haven't named); and many pageant "daughters".

She was preceded in death by her husband, Richard, on May 29, 2014, after 55 years of marriage; her parents, Norman "Beado" A. Blanchette (May 3, 1968) and Irene Louise Luebke Blanchette (January 16, 2001); as well as her younger sister, Annette Blanchette (February 12, 2015), and a sister-in-law, Sally (Tom) Frank; and also her father and mother-in-law Robert and Norma (Leaman) Lewis.

Visitation for family and friends will be held at St. Peter's Catholic Church at 449 High Avenue in Oshkosh, Wis., on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. with a service of remembrance beginning at 11:00 a.m. with Father Jerry Pastors officiating. Interment will be at Lake View Memorial Park Cemetery, 2786 Algoma Blvd, in Oshkosh.

In lieu of flowers a memorial will be established for The Grand Theatre in Oshkosh.






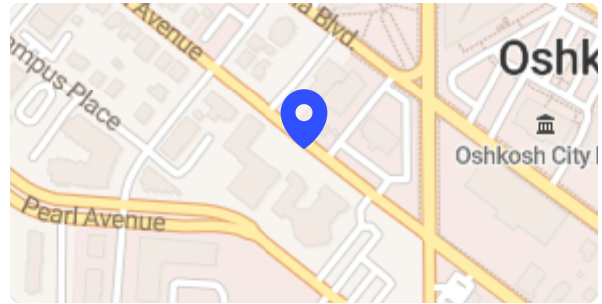
Events

Mary-Louise Lewis




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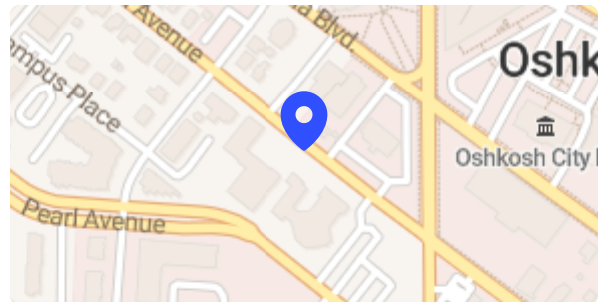
Visitation

-  **Wednesday**, April 24, 2024
-  9:00 AM - 11:00 AM cst
-  **Saint Peter Catholic Church**
449 High Ave, Oshkosh WI 54901



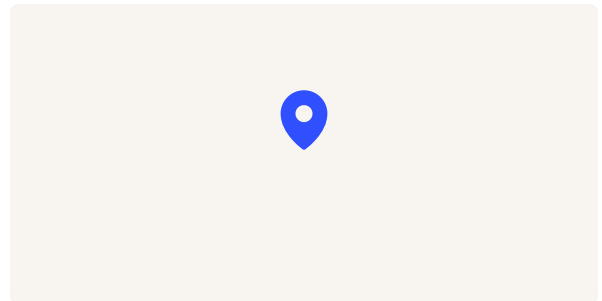
Service

-  **Wednesday**, April 24, 2024
-  11:00 AM cst
-  **Saint Peter Catholic Church**
449 High Ave, Oshkosh WI 54901



Cemetery Details

-  **Lake View Memorial Park**
WI





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Mary-Louise by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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