



Carol Jean Nelson

MAR 20, 1943 - AUG 6, 2025



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Carol Jean (Thomas) Nelson died on August 6th 2025. She was born in North-East Iowa on March 20th, 1943 and lived a life of joy and love.

As a kid, Carol adored her cowboy boots and cap guns along with harassing her big brother, Ron. Some years later, sisters came along (Shari and Lori). At the time they might have been annoying little sisters, but as adults they all enjoyed each other immensely. Their laughter at family gatherings was something to behold.

Some years after Carol graduated from High School, she moved to Los Angeles, where her brother lived. She worked a couple of different jobs and loved her time there. She told the story of being invited to the Playboy Mansion to audition to be a bunny. Her brother and his friends dared her to go, so she did. She said she wore a muumuu so that no one would notice her.

She moved back to Iowa and began the joyful work of raising a family with Don Nelson. Their story went something like... He asked her to marry him and she said no. He asked her again to marry him and she said no. He asked her again to marry him, and she said maybe. So, he set a date.

Theirs was a great love. Walks and talks and vacations, sitting on the deck, on the bench in their front yard, on their patio, they would read and chat and greet everyone passing by. They often held hands.

As a family, Carol and Don and their 2 kids read books together, played games, went camping, loved on foster kids and enjoyed foreign exchange students. They had all sorts of adventures, and loved each other through the ups and downs of life. The dinner table was central to their family.

One of Carol's favorite memories was a five week adventure with Don, soon after his retirement. They went to San Diego to explore, visited Don's brother and wife in Nevada, saw Carol's brother in Los Angeles, and saw everything between here and there including the Badlands, which were always a favorite.



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For years, Don and Carol would spend a few weeks in Door County, Wisconsin. They would camp at Peninsula State park and sit by the water and read. They would see multiple concerts and plays, eat amazing food, and enjoy the beauty of Wisconsin. In 1971, Carol had her first symptoms of MS. She got really sick with it the first time more than 10 years later. She hoped that at least she could get her 13 year old son, Chris and her 11 year old daughter, Cathy through high school. What a gift that her youngest grandchild just graduated from college. She had so many bonus years and she was grateful for each one.

Carol discovered that her physical symptoms of MS were better when she was happy, so she chose happiness. She worked for it, not only for herself, but shared it with family and friends, neighbors and her church. She loved to be connected with people and even in her last weeks in memory care, had deep impact on her hospice caregivers, the staff in her unit, and other residents.

While living in Calmar, she served on the Calmar Library Board, volunteered at the Decorah Hospital Gift Shop, and was a dedicated member of Calmar Community United Methodist Church, serving as financial secretary, youth coordinator, and active participant in United Methodist Women.

Together, she and Don took great pride in their kids, their kids in law (shout out to Julie and Mike) and grandkids (Erald, Bea, Mel, Kaia, and John) and showered love on all of them.

They also have loved giving to good causes over the years, so if you want to honor her life, give a donation to one of the places she loved - The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), Habitat for Humanity, Oshkosh Area Community Pantry, National Park Foundation, Reconciling Ministries Network, Calmar Public Library, The American Civil Liberties Union, The Nature Conservancy, or something that is near and dear to your heart that brings joy to the world.

We will be celebrating Carol's life on Monday, August 18th at Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church with Rev. Ellen Rasmussen officiating. The family requests casual attire. Visitation begins at 1:00 and the service begins at 2:00 with really good cookies and coffee to follow.

Carol is survived by her husband Don Nelson; children Chris (Julie) Nelson and



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Cathy (Mike) Weigand; grandchildren Kaia (Kyle) Mersinger, Erald, Bea, Mel, and John Weigand; sister Shari (Greg) Hampton; brother-in-law David Heyden; and extended family. She was preceded in death by her parents, Clifford and Thelma Thomas; brother, Roland Thomas; and sister, Lori Heyden.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDomt-G-yogkp6kdlaZl-jg>

or

<https://www.facebook.com/AlgomaBoulevardUMC>

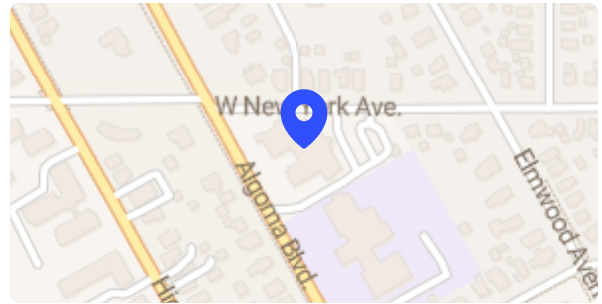


Events

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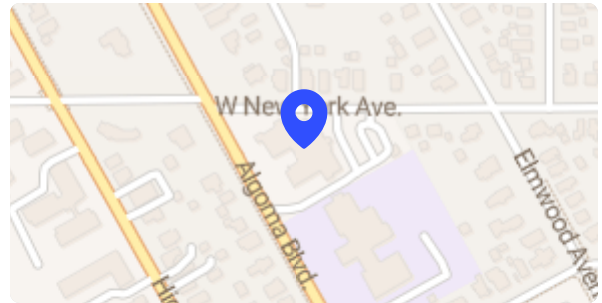
Visitation

- 📅 **Monday**, August 18, 2025
- 🕒 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM cst
- 📍 **Algoma Blvd United Methodist Church**
1174 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh WI 54901



Memorial Service

- 📅 **Monday**, August 18, 2025
- 🕒 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM cst
- 📍 **Algoma Blvd United Methodist Church**
1174 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh WI 54901





Tribute Wall

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Anne lit a candle in honor of Carol.



August 14 at 5:25 AM



Linda L Morische September 23 at 9:48 AM

Carol and I go waaaay back to VBS and early elementary school in Sheffield and then reconnected post H S Graduation back in Sheffield! We were there for each other other at our weddings and have remained wonderful friends ever since! Now, I look forward to being together in our eternal home one day 💕 Linda (Gilchriest, McGowan) Morische now in Ankeny, Iowa



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Carol by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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