



Jon J Miller Wilker

1940 - 2022

Jon Jolane Wilker, 82, of Owatonna, died Sunday, November 20, 2022, at Birchwood.

Jon was born March 9, 1940 in Cass Lake, MN on the Leech Lake Reservation, the child of Russell and Elvira "Dolly" (Welch) Miller. She grew up on Kitchi Lake, playing and working with her sister Pat on the resort her parents and grandparents owned. She graduated from Blackduck High School and Bemidji State University. She became a health and physical education teacher, and her first job was in Chaska. She and Pat met their husbands Don Wilker and David Belina when they and friends from Owatonna visited the resort. Jon and Don were married July 7, 1962 in Blackduck.

Jon moved to the Wilker farm in Meriden Township and joined St. Paul's Lutheran Church. She taught in Waseca until she was fired when she became pregnant with Michael. Two years later, Kent was born. Don and Jon built a life together taking care of their children, their homestead, land, and animals including her horses and their dogs. She enjoyed backyard gatherings, meals, and traveling with family, church, and school friends.

She returned to teaching at Owatonna Junior High School as a health teacher. She worked as the school district K-12 health curriculum coordinator and on the state health curriculum advisory panel during the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. She began each semester teaching her students IALAC: I am lovable and capable. Then she led them to care for their bodies and to respect one another.

At church, Jon served as Sunday School teacher, adult bible study leader, and prayer ministry coordinator. In the community, she served as a 4-H leader of the Meriden Meadowlarks and she volunteered for Planned Parenthood, Owatonna Hospital, and the Village of Yesteryear.

She is survived by her sons, Michael (Judy Kittleson) Wilker of Decorah, IA, and Kent (Kristen) Wilker of Owatonna; four grandchildren, Maija and Karl Kittleson Wilker of St. Paul and Northfield, Chad (Jill Malecha) Wilker of Bloomington, and Abby (Sergio Maya) Wilker of Owatonna; her brother-in-law, Vern (June) Wilker of Owatonna; brother-in-law, Lowell Bethke of Worland, Wyoming; nieces, Deb (Pat) Zeman and Michelle (Mike) Noble; nephews, Peter (Renee) Belina, Mitchell (Rochelle) Belina, Kevin (Sue) Bethke, and Kurt (Carol) Bethke.

She was preceded in death by her parents Russ and Dolly; her husband, Don; sister and brother-in-law, Pat and David Belina, and sister-in-law, Elaine Bethke.

Visitation will be at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Meriden, from 9 to 10 a.m. on Wednesday December 14, 2022. Funeral services, followed by lunch, will be held at 11:00 AM on Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Meriden with the Rev. Billie Jo Wicks officiating. Interment will be in the St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery, Meriden. In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Meriden.