



Barbara M. Berdes

September 23, 2024

Barbara Marie Berdes, (née Kuhl), a fiercely devoted mother, wife, teacher, and librarian, passed away peacefully on September 23, 2024, at the age of 78. Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Deana Alice Kuhl, (née Balderson), on January 31, 1946. We will remember her for her empathy, intelligence, compassion, generosity, and love of children. Barbara had a passion for music and dancing. As a teenager, she spent every Saturday night walking to the Milwaukee Christian Center with her girlfriends, to bop and hop to live bands playing the rock and roll of the late 1950's and early 1960's. Her love of music continued throughout her life. Barbara was an excellent student and graduated from South Division High School in 1964. She had two dreams: the first was to attend college and become a teacher at a public school to help children in poverty who faced the same challenges she did as a child, and the second to become a mother. She married Roman William Berdes on October 21, 1967. Barbara was a voracious reader and educated herself about childhood education. She learned about Dr. Maria Montessori and advocated with other parents to add this method of teaching to MPS and to finally desegregate the public schools. In 1973 MPS launched the first public Montessori school in Wisconsin and in 1976 opened MacDowell Montessori Elementary, one of the first desegregated schools in Milwaukee. Barbara and her husband sent all three of their children to MacDowell, Eighth Street Middle School and Rufus King International Baccalaureate High School, and college of their choice. Barbara started college in 1987 and graduated in 1992 with a

Bachelor's degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction and a minor in Library and Information Technology from UW-Milwaukee. She began her career as a second-grade teacher at Alexander Mitchell School on Milwaukee's near south side. Her second dream was answered when MPS put out a call for librarians. Later she earned a Master of Science (MS) degree in 1999 from UW-Whitewater. She accomplished this by driving to and from Whitewater 100 miles per night, up to three times per week, while also teaching full-time at Mitchell. She was promoted to Librarian in 1999. Barbara retired in 2008.

During our years of retirement everything was enjoyable. During the last two years every night she would say "thank you for sending me to school and stopping me from smoking". I would tell her it was the Big Guy upstairs and herself. I was just along for the ride. I had nothing to do with it. Honey, I really miss you. The family had a private wake on September 27th and in the song in the year twenty twenty-five there will be Sunday masses for Barbara at the Basilica of St. Josephat on January 26th, September 21st, and October 19th all at noon. Barbara is survived by her husband Roman, her two daughters Belinda and Bethany, her son Roman II, her brother Warren, and numerous nephews, nieces, in-laws, spouses, and friends. She will be greatly missed by all.