



Dena Ann Rude

January 18, 2026

Passed away peacefully with her family by her side on January 18, 2026, at the age of 77 years. Beloved mother of Rachel (Chavis Johnson) Adair. Cherished nana of Jacob Adair. Loving sister of Valerie (David) Vanni, Bernadette (Stephan) Flaim, and Thomas Rude. Further survived by nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. Preceded in death by her parents, Darrell and Nina (nee Ganny) Rude, and her significant other of 26 years, Kimmy Werner.

Dena was a teacher for the Milwaukee Public Schools, retiring in 2004 to take care of her grandson, Jacob. She had a passion for mentoring and educating children. She was a member of the Milwaukee Players for many years, and enjoyed acting, singing, and the theater. She also enjoyed gardening in her spare time. Dena was a selfless woman who will be missed by all who knew her.

A Private Cremation was held.

Tribute Wall

JA

“ *Rip granny*



Jacob Adair - February 16 at 03:24 AM

JS

“ *I met Dena in high school and will always remember her intelligence and talent. Having her as a friend in high school and college is something I will never forget. Please accept my heartfelt condolences.*

Jim Staniszewski - January 25 at 08:19 PM

BS

“ *Dena was such a lovely person, inside and out. We became friends at Milwaukee Players, bonding over juggling rehearsals and having a small child at home. I remember sitting with her, crafting things for our kids during rehearsals! It was always nice to run into her occasionally at the store and catc up.
My sincere condolences to Dena's family; I know that she will be missed. Keep all of the wonderful memories in your hearts.*

Beverly Sargent - January 24 at 05:42 PM

DA

“ I’m so sorry to hear of Dena’s passing. Dena and I met at the College Park and Ride for years sharing rides to Elm. I love Dena and I send my condolences to her entire family. May she now find peace. ❤️

Debbie Arnold - January 22 at 09:11 PM

JS

“ My heartfelt sympathies go out to Rachel, Jacob, & Dena's sisters and brother. Dena taught across the hall from me at the old Elm Creative Arts Elementary about 40 years ago. She was a mentor and friend. She had spectacular talent as a singer and actress, too! Many terrific memories of this amazing woman. RIP Dena

Joanne E Smith - January 22 at 01:44 PM

JA

Rip granny 🙏❤️🙏

Jacob Adair - February 16 at 03:31 AM