



Joan M. Cates

December 4, 1949 - January 19, 2024

Joan M. Cates (Saunders), Age 74, passed away unexpectedly Friday, January 19, 2024, at KU Hospital in Kansas City, MO.

She and her twin sister Jean were born December 4, 1949, in Maryville, MO., the daughters of Ward and Alice Saunders. They were very proud parents blessed with three daughters.

Joan grew up being very close with all her family members. Her mother always read to her children before bedtime. Joan loved music, to sing and read. You could always find her reading in the house or outside, lying on a blanket under a tree. She was extremely intelligent, learning always came very easy for her. She had the distinction of being the only student at King City, MO, that read every book in the library. She was an excellent singer (soprano) and won many contests.

Joan graduated from high school in 1967, went on to college, and then went on to work where she met her future husband, Dennis Cates. They were married and within two years they were blessed with a wonderful baby boy, Michael. Both parents were so proud of their son. She always referred to him

as a God sent.

Joan & Dennis parted ways nine years into their marriage but maintained that their main interest was in their son Michael, who was the most important thing in their lives.

Joan loved travel and went on many trips as a singer in a band. She also worked as a traveling photographer for many years loving photographing children and scenery. Living an adventurous life, she held numerous other positions including a singing telegram, which she adored.

She always loved the sun, especially loving the way the sun came through her window, reflecting light and shining on her collection of glass objects, art and family photos.

Joan loved working in her yard. Tasting and seeing the beauty that she created with special plants that meant so much to her. She enjoyed going to the farmers markets to get her fresh vegetables and fruits. She also enjoyed going to anything musical. She always was able to sing even when as she aged.

She adored her mother, who she was convinced was a Saint. They were so alike. They loved to play the piano and sing together.

Joan is survived by her son Michael (Wendy) Cates, her grandchildren Jesse

and Josey Forney and her sister Mary Nicholson. She was preceded in death by her parents Ward and Alice Saunders and her beloved twin sister Jean Wilson.

Joan will be forever in our hearts, she was and always will be loved, missed, and thought of every day. We were blessed just to have known her. Our souls will never part.

The family will be holding a private memorial at a later date.

To live is to grieve, but love lasts forever!