



Jeannine Michelle McMillen

December 17, 1972 - March 7, 2019

On December 17, 1972, an angel came to live among us in the form of a baby girl with Down's Syndrome.

Jeannine Michelle McMillen was born December 17, 1972 and passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by people who loved her, on March 7, 2019. When Jeannine was born, she was diagnosed with Down's Syndrome and heart defects. She was placed in foster care and Tom and Claudine McMillen, a loving family who had fostered many children and had four of their own, was asked to take her. They immediately took this tiny little angel and nurtured and cared for her until she grew strong enough for open heart surgery to repair the defects. Doctors had advised the McMillen's that Jeannine might not live more than two weeks, but supported by loving foster parents and siblings, Jeannine not only lived, she thrived. Jeannine remained a member of the McMillen family for the rest of her beautiful life.

Jeannine was a joy to all who knew her. She never met a stranger and it was very common for her to approach a new person with an outstretched hand, saying "Hi, I'm Jeannine." She never judged or criticized others. She loved her parents, siblings, nieces and nephews and friends, and they loved her. Her favorite things were dancing and singing, and she loved to watch musicals and sing and dance along with them. It was a joy to watch her celebrate life. She truly lived the motto, "Dance like no one is watching".

Jeannine graduated from Poudre High School and went on to work at Foothills Gateway. As she grew and matured, it became time for her to live semi-independently and along with her beloved foster sister Marcia, she moved into a supervised apartment and spent many happy years working and engaging in the community. When Marcia passed away, Jeannine was heartbroken and spoke frequently of her sister in heaven.

Eleven years ago, Jeannine moved into the home of her final caretaker, Tina Cisneros. Tina (aka "Linda" to Jeannine), along with Jeannine's family, lovingly cared for Jeannine as her health declined. When doctors told the family that Jeannine's prognosis was short,

with only months to live, Tina and the family gathered together to plan a celebration for Jeannine. The one thing she had always talked of and hoped for, was a wedding of her own. Whether or not a groom was part of the wedding didn't matter – Jeannine wanted the dress, the dancing, the cake and the celebration. And so, her dream became a reality on February 23, when together with her friends and family, she was celebrated with her own beautiful wedding party. It was the last time we watched Jeannine freely dance. She left her wheelchair and walker behind and with a burst of energy not seen in many months, she danced, laughed, ate, sang and smiled. She lived her dream wedding and she was happy.

Jeannine was preceded in death by her mother, Claudine McMillen and her sister Marcia Gerlach. She is survived by her father, Thomas McMillen Sr., her siblings Dan McMillen, Tom (Sandy) McMillen Jr, Nancy (Brad) Burke, Kathy Warner, Brenda McMillen, numerous nieces and nephews and her care giver, Tina Cisneros.

Heaven has received back the angel that was loaned to us on earth for 46 beautiful years. This angel is now cradled in the loving arms of her mother Claudine and sister Marcia, and dancing with joy for the Lord. A celebration of Jeannine's life will be held on March 30, 10:30 AM, at Summit View Church, 1601 West Drake Rd., Fort Collins. All who knew her and were touched by her are welcome to attend.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to Foothills Gateway, 301 W. Skyway Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80525 or <https://foothillsgateway.org/how-to-help/donate/>.

Comments



“ I am so sad to read of Jeannine's passing. I've been out of town for an extended time and so missed this announcement and her service. Prayers of comfort for all as you miss her physical presence: prayers of thanks be to God, the Messiah, for her faith in Him and His gracious love for us. We will see Claudine and Jeannine again some day.

Karen M. Boehler - April 15 at 12:08 AM



“ I feel blessed to have grown up with Jeannine at Faith Evangelical Church and adored being in Awana with her, and Marcia both! She was a very special lady and our condolences go out to the entire family! Prayers, Amy Thorne-Starck and Family

Amy Thorne-Starck - March 25 at 10:28 AM