



Donna Mae McClellan

September 24, 1940 - October 1, 2025

Donna was a remarkable woman. She had a natural talent for producing a bountiful vegetable garden and an exceptional aptitude for nurturing the most beautiful flowers, specifically her roses. Donna was most notably known for the very best downhome, homemade, southern cooking - - and not just for her family, but for the largest gatherings to boot. Donna was a selfless servant to others, and especially dear to her heart were all her grandchildren, whom she loved so very much, and was deeply proud of. Donna Mae McClellan, 85, of Laporte, Colorado, passed away peacefully at home and went to meet her Lord and Savior after a long battle of Alzheimer's Disease on October 1, 2025.

Donna was born in Raymondville, Missouri on September 24, 1940 to James David Connolly and Ruby Ethel Connolly (Sullivan). Donna had a so many fond memories of her parents and brother Dean, as well as numerous aunts, uncles and cousins since both parents combined had 22 siblings. She often spoke about how the family would work together with other neighboring families, particularly during the planting and harvesting months, and how she would be required to help prepare 2 or 3 separate table settings for the breakfast, lunch and dinner meals to feed the many shifts of the family crews. This explains why it was nothing for her to organize and prepare hundreds of meals for the many large gatherings over the years. Donna, too, shared about the many times of getting up extra early to get a full day of chores completed before school, so that the family could leave immediately after school to drive

to watch her younger brother Dean's out-of-town high school football games, which she so enthusiastically looked forward to all week long. Another time Donna shared when she and her brother Dean were playing with matches on the outside porch stoop, accidentally started a fire, and subsequently got their britches tanned with a peach tree limb by their mother. She always said she hated peach trees - - and though it wasn't a "fond" memory, it still always made her laugh.

Donna attended grade school in Raymondville, went to middle school in Licking, and was a 1958 graduate from Houston High School in Houston, Missouri. Following graduation, she began lacing baseballs in Licking when Rawlings opened up two baseball factories. She took pride in getting to work at the major league baseball factory and often physically showed us just how precisely she had to lace the baseballs. No wonder decades later she had to have shoulder surgeries.

During her time at the baseball factory, she met her best friend, Marie Weippert (Dettmar). They became kindred souls and eventually took a vacation together to Mexico, where they took in a Mexican Bull Fighting performance, which at that time was legal and considered the "golden age" of bull fighting. Though Donna eventually moved to Colorado, and Marie to New Mexico, they continued to keep in touch until Marie passed in 2019.

Since both of Donna's parents were from large families, she was always blessed to spend all the holidays with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. On Thanksgiving of 1960, Donna met her soon-to-be husband and love of her life, Richard McClellan (fondly known as Dick). Dick was in the Army and stationed in Chicago at the time. One of his best friends that he graduated with from Hayden High School in Colorado, Tommy Fiske, was dating one of Donna's cousins, Nedria Sullivan. Dick happened to be invited to the Sullivan Thanksgiving dinner and of course was introduced to Donna.

This would set the stage for the next chapter of Donna's story when the dating begins. During the time they dated, Dick would hitchhike, (and sometimes even drive for those that gave him a lift) from Chicago to Raymondville, nearly 500 miles one way to visit Donna as much as he could on the weekends. Wow... now that's some devotion! Years later they would share with us, time and time again, about these weekend jaunts and the sorts of people Dick would meet during these travels. It was inevitable that soon, Dick would propose to Donna and they would be married on September 3, 1961 in Raymondville.

Immediately after Dick and Donna were married, they would be stationed in Ludwigsburg, Germany, which was part of the larger Stuttgart Military Community during the Cold War. Here they made a home for a short period in an Army housing facility where each floor had several apartments, but only one shared bathroom at the end of the hall. During this tour of duty, their first daughter, Sandra, was born in August, 1962. Eventually, in 1963, Dick and Donna left Germany and returned to the States, since Dick's enlistment with the Army had ended. They found a home in Frankfurt, Missouri as Dick found employment close by in Hannibal, which was where Donna gave birth to their second daughter, Sara, in June of 1964. In 1965, Dick, Donna and the girls found their way to Colorado where a job was waiting for Dick. It was here in Fort Collins, Colorado they would pave the path for the rest of their lives. Donna took a job at Mr. Taco where she worked for a few years. She use to share numerous interesting and hilarious stories about the experiences she had while working there. In September of 1968, Donna left Mr. Taco and gave birth to her youngest daughter, Saneta.

Shortly after moving to Fort Collins, Dick and Donna found a church home at Northside Baptist Church, which eventually became Calvary Baptist. It was here they attended for numerous years, where they helped their three

daughters cultivate a relationship with Jesus, and where they formed long-lasting friendships with many families. Donna called those closest to them the “Five M’s” – McClellans, McFanns, Millers, Moneys and Morfords. For the next couple of decades these families spent time together not only at church, but they celebrated birthdays and holidays together, had BBQ’s and fish fries, and went on camping, fishing and hunting trips. Oh, the stories Donna would remember and tell repeatedly over the years - - especially the one when Joann Miller swore there was a bear outside of the tent wreaking havoc with trash cans and coolers. Donna and Joann quietly crept all seven kids from the tent into the camper shell of the Ford pickup truck. That’s where all 9 stayed and slept through the night, only to discover the next morning that it was actually just a dog that belonged to another camper down the way. They laughed about this for years. Dick and Donna continued to foster and enjoy these friendships throughout the years.

In 1973, Dick and Donna built a new home on about 3 acres and moved the family to Laporte. It was here that Donna helped to make a new home; tended to the horses, cows, chickens and dogs (and barn cats) that became a part of the family; forged new friendships with the neighbors; and helped raise their daughters while Dick was working for the Poudre Fire Authority. After a few years, they decided to build another home on a parcel across the field that would help them to expand by providing additional pasture and build a hay business; possibilities to help grow their animal family; and opportunities for their daughters to participate in 4H, Arabian horse shows, and other livestock endeavors. It was here that Donna was able to form and grow her milk customer base; plant, cultivate and harvest her well over-sized vegetable garden; and grow and care for her beautiful lilac bushes, irises, hollyhocks, petunias, peonies, and most pridefully, her roses. Donna could take a weed and grow it into a beautiful bloom. She was a natural caretaker, and not just in her gardens. Donna was a servant... God’s servant. Donna served and cared for so many... both animals and people. She cared for not only her animals,

but at times those that belonged to her neighbors. She provided childcare and love to dozens of children, some from broken homes. She cared for her "Senior Ladies" at Immanuel Baptist Church, whom she loved deeply, never missing a birthday in which she personally wrote special notes to. She cared for the multitude of members where she attended church by planning, preparing and serving hundreds of Wednesday Night Meals, Sunday Church dinners, and other church events, along with her dear friends Bootsie Keener and Electa Armstrong. She served the youth wrestling community by planning, preparing and serving hundreds of meals to the wrestling officials, table help, coaches and workers at dozens of national wrestling events. She loved her wrestling officials and they loved her. She served the youth in Larimer County by working at local and county 4H events. She served her neighbors by caring for and helping them whenever they needed her. She also cared for the ladies in her ceramic classics by preparing treats and giving trinkets to help them feel special. Donna served and cared for everyone! Above all... and what was most meaningful to her - - and to those on the receiving end... she gave of herself and cared for and served her family. Donna simply had the most amazing and natural insight as she always knew what someone needed before they needed it, and she responded in kind. Donna loved, cared for and served her parents, husband, three daughters and their husbands, 9 grandchildren and their spouses, and 10 great-grandchildren. Through all the years, until she was no longer able, there was never a birthday, anniversary, birth of a grandchild, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving and other celebrations, that she missed or did not acknowledge, send a card, made a phone call to, or attend a gathering. All of the grandkids loved spending time with their Grandma Mac and being doted over. They knew she would be present with them, and that they would get spoiled rotten. They loved it when Grandma Mac cooked with them - - specifically decorating and baking her well known sugar cookies, did all kinds of activities and crafts with them, and always came through when they came to her with a fundraiser.

Donna had the most playful spirit and was a great sport when it came to family members teasing or bantering her, especially her son-in-laws and grandchildren. They would grab or tickle her knees, or chase and flick her with a kitchen towel, and grandma in return would respond with the flyswatter. On occasion they would tease her when her Missouri accent was exposed, and one time even composed a song for her about WD-40, since she always had a can on hand. Grandma was so good natured and accepted the challenge as she was a formidable opponent that could outplay their hand.

Donna's love for family and others was first and foremost shown through her cooking. She never attended a gathering or event without food in hand. At family gatherings, she was an unmatched host. It was always notable and said out loud again and again, "Mom cooks for an army." Her cooking will be missed by many... and not just family, but by the hundreds of children at Vacation Bible Schools; those attending church functions, school dances and banquets; for 4H activities; Poudre Fire Authority firefighters; and wrestling officials, coaches and workers. No one ever visited Donna's house without being offered a cup of coffee and a treat. Donna was "the cook" and a darn good one! There will never be a pot roast, elk steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, canned green beans, burritos, enchiladas, blueberry dessert, cobbler, pumpkin pie, cherry pie, peach pie, apple pie, blackberry pie, lemon meringue pie, chocolate cream pie, banana nut bread, poppy seed bread, never fail cookies, and the sugar cookies she made with her grandchildren, that will taste the same as or as good as Donna's.

Donna was one of the hardest working, hardest loving and most selfless women in existence and served all those she came in contact with in some way. Donna was a wife, daughter, sister, granddaughter, cousin, mother, aunt, grandmother, great grandmother, and friend to many. She was a child of God, and He her Lord and Savior. We celebrate that she is with Jesus now in

Heaven, and we look forward to the day we can be with her again.

Donna, 85, was born on September 24, 1940 in Raymondville, Missouri. She passed away peacefully in her home in Laporte on October 1, 2025.

She is preceded in death by her father (David Connolly), mother (Ruby Connolly – Sullivan), brother (Dean Connolly) and sister in-laws (Sue Connolly and Linda Trujillo).

She is survived by her husband of 64 years, Richard (Dick) McClellan; daughters Sandra Legino (Andy), Sara Anderson (Kevin) and Saneta Gavette (Brion); grandchildren Geoffrey Anderson, Brittany Turnbull (Chris), Lindsey Ophaug (Casey), Gregory Anderson (Catie), Zachary Legino (Kylee), Tyler Gavette (McKenzie), Hayden Gavette, Toby Gavette and Evie Gavette; great grandchildren Coy and Quade Turnbull; Cooper and Kacen Legino; Paxton, Hollynd and Irelyn Ophaug; Scarlett and Aviah Anderson; and Elijah Gavette; and sister in-law Dottie McKee.

Donna's passing has left a huge hole in our hearts, because our Wife, Mama, Grandma Mac and Gigi, cannot be duplicated.

- Her selflessness cannot be duplicated.
- Her care for others cannot be duplicated.
- Her service to others cannot be duplicated.
- Her cultivation of over-sized vegetable gardens cannot be duplicated.
- Her nurturing of flowers, particularly her roses cannot be duplicated.
- Her care for her "Senior Ladies" cannot be duplicated.
- Her care for the small children she helped raise cannot be duplicated.
- Her love of and service to her church cannot be duplicated.
- Her cooking for "armies" and down-home southern cooking no place, no time, ever, absolutely cannot be duplicated.

- Her love for her family, most precious for her grandchildren and great grandchildren cannot be duplicated.
- Her love for and service to Jesus cannot be duplicated.
- And our love for Donna, wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother cannot be duplicated.

She will be missed.

Please join us in honoring and celebrating Donna's life. A Celebration of Life service will be held on Saturday, November 1st, at 5:00 pm, at Revive Church located at 4608 Rist Canyon Road, Laporte, CO. A dinner will be served and Donna's favorite hymns will be played following the service.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV 1. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (MT)

Revive Church
4608 Rist Canyon Road
Laporte, CO 80535

Tribute Wall



“ Dear Dick and Family, We are so very sorry for your loss. As a firefighter on Dick's crew it was very special to be welcomed by Donna and her warm and generous personality. And delicious cooking along with funny stories. Sending our deepest sympathies and love, Lou Abbott and Mark Rohrer

Louise Abbott - December 06, 2025 at 01:15 PM

“ When I think of my aunt, I think of warmth, laughter, and love that showed up every single time I needed it. She had that special gift of being present — whether the moment was big or small, she made it meaningful just by being there.

Some of my favorite memories are the times she took me to Rainbow events when I was part of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls. She never missed a chance to cheer me on, to make me laugh, or to remind me to stand tall and believe in myself. She always had a smile on her face, no matter what, and that smile could light up any room. Through her laughter and encouragement, she gave me confidence that I still carry with me today.

We shared so many little adventures together — like stopping by Vern’s for their amazing cinnamon rolls. Those simple moments, sitting together and sharing something sweet, were always filled with laughter and warmth. We also had so much fun shopping for flowers for my grandma’s yard, carefully picking out the perfect ones, talking, laughing, and turning an ordinary errand into something special. And no matter what, she always had coffee and a treat for you — a small gesture that somehow made you feel completely at home.

She was there for my band concerts too, her familiar smile shining from the audience. No matter how I played, I always knew I had her full support — she was proud of me simply because I tried.

When I started college, she was right by my side again, taking me shopping for my first year. I can still hear her voice helping me pick out outfits, teaching me how to make more outfits for less money, and how to see the potential in every piece. It wasn’t just fashion advice — it was life advice: make the most of what you have, be creative, and always carry yourself with confidence and joy.

What I will remember most about her is her laughter — that beautiful, contagious sound that could fill a room and lift your spirits

instantly. She had a way of making the world brighter, even on the hardest days. Her laughter will ring in our hearts for many years to come, a constant reminder of her love, her kindness, and the happiness she brought into every moment.

Losing her leaves a space that can never be replaced, but her spirit will always be with me. Every time I find the courage to be myself, every time I share a laugh, smile through a challenge, or offer kindness, I'll feel her presence.

My aunt gave me more than memories — she gave me love, lessons, laughter, and the strength to be who I am. And those gifts I will keep with me forever.

*Love,
Brenda*

Brenda Brazelton - November 02, 2025 at 01:56 PM

BT

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Brittany Turnbull - October 14, 2025 at 10:48 PM

SA

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Sara Anderson - October 10, 2025 at 01:04 PM

SL

“ 1 file added to the album Donna



Sandee Legino - October 09, 2025 at 01:57 PM

WC

This is the face I remember in our childhood. She was 6 yrs older than me and my twin William Ray.

Wanda Kay Cummins Critser - October 09, 2025 at 05:24 PM