



Martha Kielhorn Gaines

December 29, 1940 - March 29, 2024

Martha Jean Kielhorn Gaines, a beloved wife, sister, mother, and grandmother, passed away on March 29, 2024. She was born on December 29, 1940, in Harrisburg, Illinois to parents Jennie and William Kielhorn. She was the oldest of four children.

She is survived by her two daughters, Laura Lynn Gaines and Elissa Margaret Pitts (Shawn Pitts); her grandchildren, Amanda Gaines, Jarett Pitts, Macy Pitts, and Ryder Pitts; and her siblings, Bonita Gordon, Janet Suffern, and Rick Kielhorn. She is preceded in death by her husband, Robert Gaines, her mother, father, and brother, Bill Kielhorn.

Education was very important to Martha, and she distinguished herself early on as the Valedictorian of her high school class. She pursued her passion for learning, earning her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Food Science and Nutrition from the University of Illinois. Her dedication and hard work were evident in her work as a lab assistant and teacher, collegiate instructor, state extension agent, and airline reservationist at Continental Airlines.

On August 27, 1961, Martha married Robert "Bob" Gaines, her high school sweetheart and the love of her life. They shared countless cherished moments until Bob's passing in 2001. Bob was a teacher and coach, and Martha was the greatest (and loudest) fan. With the benefits Martha received from her

time working for Continental Airlines, Martha and Bob had the opportunity to travel to many different places, finding immense joy in exploring the world and creating lasting memories. Bob would often exclaim that they were going to “go broke flying for free”. They passed their love of travel along to their children and grandchildren.

Martha found immeasurable pleasure in her role as a grandmother, and her grandchildren were her pride and joy (Even if some of them were Chiefs fans!). She delighted in talking and hanging out with her granddaughter Amanda, who was blessed with Bob’s red hair; or waiting for a phone call from her oldest grandson Jarett whenever the Rockies hit a “ham slam”; or watching Hallmark movies and loaning her clothes to her youngest granddaughter Macy; or calling her youngest grandson Ryder “to fix” her computer, phone, T.V., etc., and to help her spend her Kohl’s cash. Martha believed a grandmother’s duty was to spoil her grandchildren, and she did it beautifully with her unwavering love, her unconditional support, and her irrevocable passion.

An avid sports enthusiast, Martha passionately supported the Broncos, Rockies, Colorado State University, University of Illinois, and Poudre High School. Her enthusiasm for sports was infectious, and her cheers (and occasional jeers) could be heard echoing from the stands or her home. Her enthusiasm for sports was matched only by her love for a good game of Bridge with her friends, relishing in the camaraderie of friendly competition. She would often brag about bringing home the winning pot of a dollar or the losing prize of a quarter. In her leisure time, Martha enjoyed watching Jeopardy and Dateline and indulging her creative side through crafts, sewing, and cooking.

Martha Jean Kielhorn Gaines leaves behind a legacy of love and strength. She will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her, and her

memory will forever live on in the hearts of those she touched.

A memorial service to celebrate Martha's life will be held at the Fort Collins Marriott (350 East Horsetooth Road) on Monday, April 22 at 12:30 in the afternoon. There will be light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments following the service. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations to the Bob and Martha Gaines Undergraduate Research Fellowship in Mathematics or to Brent's Place, a long-term home away from home for families and children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses while they receive treatment at local hospitals.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR **22**. 12:30 PM - 3:00 PM (MT)

Marriott Fort Collins
350 E. Horsetooth Rd.
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Tribute Wall

MJ

“ my dear friend/classmate/ and confident is now with the love of her life again. did you know she enjoyed being a "cougar".....I was so happy to share time at our class reunion a few years ago and we did try to make our BIG one.last summer. and did you know she beat me out of valedictorian so I shared second best, but she really was kinda smart. so many memories. her smile is forever in our minds/hearts.....miss ya, Ms Martha.

marlene melton jacobs - April 06, 2024 at 11:43 AM