



Pat Wilcox

July 15, 1949 - July 22, 2020

Mary Patricia Wilcox (nee Heffernan) Age 71, resident of Sterling Heights, Michigan. Passed away on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 in Troy, Michigan. Born July 15, 1949 in Buffalo, New York to the late Jeremiah Heffernan and Joan (nee Hurley) Steger. Mary graduated from Marygrove College with a Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Education. Retired in 2014 after spending 42 years as a school teacher with Utica Community Schools, where she touched the lives of hundreds of students over the course of her career. Mary's love for teaching students continued even after retiring, you would often find Mary still helping students at Graebner Elementary School volunteering in the media center. A member of St. Michael Catholic Church in Sterling Heights, where she was a committee member with "Strangers No Longer". Avid Buffalo Bills fan, she loved to read, spending time with her book club, traveling. But most of all she loved her grandson, Nicholas. She married the love of her life Robert J. Wilcox on November, 15, 1980 and celebrated 39 years of marriage.

Loving and caring mother of Eric (Karen) Kehres. Cherished grandmother of Nicholas Kehres.

Dearest sister of Elizabeth Ann (Martin) Bloch and the late Daniel Heffernan.

A Celebration of Mary's life will be held at a later date, once gathering restrictions for COVID-19 are lifted.

Arrangements by Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Home-Utica.

Please share a memory at www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com

Cemetery

Private

MI,

Comments



“ I am so sorry to hear of Mrs. Wilcox passing. She was one of my favorite teachers. She taught me so much. Especially how to stick up for myself. I will carry that lesson for the rest of my life. Sending prayers and love to your family. Love,
Heather McInerney Grzyb

Heather McInerney Grzyb - August 02 at 09:14 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Pat Wilcox.



July 27 at 02:34 PM



“ I first met Pat and Bob when my Uncle Dave brought them to my 21st birthday party. That began a 37 year friendship. I don't remember exactly when I started doing her hair but it was many many years ago. Each month when I did her hair we talked about just about everything, from politics to our lives to sports to books. You name it and we talked about it. She helped me through some difficult times and shared a lot of good times with me too. She was incredibly smart and caring and funny. She loved all children and shared many wise thoughts on raising them which helped me to raise my daughter to be a smart, caring, and adventurous young lady. She was thrilled when she learned she would be a grandma! The memories Nicholas will have of his grandma will last him a lifetime. They shared such a special bond and she enjoyed every single minute she and Bob spent with him. Pat will be sorely missed by so many but her legacy of caring will live on in all of our memories of her.



Deb P - July 26 at 10:17 PM



“ Bob, Eric, and family,
I am so sorry for your loss. Pat was a great colleague. I went through so many great trainings with her and she enriched my teaching with her insight. Much too early!
My deepest condolences and sympathies.

Morgan Cloyd

Morgan Cloyd - July 26 at 07:49 PM



“ I was fortunate to work with Pat for 13 years at Graebner Elementary. Pat was someone who truly loved teaching and cared for her students. She was often the first one in the building and the last one to leave, unless she had an appointment to get her hair done at 4:15, which she always reminded us about the next day when she asked, “Don’t I look beautiful today?”
One of the many traits I admired about Pat was how supportive she was and how good she was at helping people feel good about themselves. She always had teachers standing around her desk after work, talking about their days and asking how they should deal with certain situations. This is probably why Pat had to work on Sundays to get her plans done and papers checked.
I’ll miss Pat’s stories about Buffalo and watching the Bills. I’ll miss her telling me about Vegas and playing craps. I’ll miss her threatening to lower my position in her will when I did something she didn’t approve of. And, I’ll miss her bragging about her grandson and how smart he is.
Pat was one in a million, and I’ll never forget her.

Jaime Sheridan - July 26 at 05:31 PM



“ Patty & I were friends at Marygrove. We were part of a group of girls who lived in the dorm. I loved hanging out with her and partying with her. We were both preparing to be teachers. She had a car and I didn't, so I appreciated her willingness to let me ride along with her when she went places. I love Patty and will always be grateful to God for bringing her into my life and making her my friend. I want to extend my most sincere condolences to Bob, her son, Eric and his wife and their son. I know Patty was crazy for her grandson. May she rest in peace.

Marilynn Pavlov - July 25 at 09:31 PM



“ Thoughts and prayers to Pats family during this time. I met Pat while I was blessed to be her nurse. We shared many stories during her stay as visitors were not allowed. She was a wonderful person and shared so much of herself with other.



“ In 1980, I was entering the 2nd grade at Graebner when I had a new teacher, Ms. Kehres. In November of that year, this little 7 year old boy had to learn that his teacher had a new name, Mrs. Wilcox. Wow, was that confusing to such a young mind. Probably not something teachers think about when getting married mid-way through the school year. (or maybe they do and stress out about it)

Little did this little boy know that this awesome teacher would then go on to be his 6th grade teacher, as well. Having had Mrs. Wilcox as a teacher twice , I am one of few students that got to spend so much time with such a wonderful person. My younger brother was also lucky enough to have her when he was in 6th grade.

They say a village raises a child, but Mrs. Wilcox raised a village. She most likely had somewhere close to a thousand students over her teaching career. What an impact to have on this world!

If you had Mrs. Wilcox as a teacher then you know her disdain for the word "ain't". She would always correct us with "is not" or "can not". I still chuckle when I inadvertently say "ain't". (LOL)

You will be greatly missed but your legacy will live on in all those tender hearts you nurtured. Thank you for being my favorite teacher!!

Geoff Michalak

G. Michalak - July 25 at 01:14 PM



“ Pat and I lived across the hallway from each other when we were freshman at Marygrove College. Sometimes the silliest things can be the sweetest memories.

I was from Philadelphia. Patty was from Buffalo. One day I saw a page of a Buffalo newspaper that was in her room and was surprised at a headline about a Cardinal Dougherty High School in Buffalo. I said, "Wow. We have a Cardinal Dougherty High School in Philadelphia." Patty looked at me strangely because I had pronounced Dougherty "Dock-er-ty" whereas in Buffalo it is pronounced "Dough-er-ty" The schools are named for the same man who was a Bishop of Buffalo and then Archbishop of Philadelphia.

We always laughed about pronunciations and vocabulary that were so different within the same country.

Patty also had the most amazing collection of Papagallo shoes and we wore the same size! My favorite were the orange with yellow polka dots whose heels were yellow with orange polka dots (or vice versa).

We often talked education as we were both teachers. She loved her students and she loved Graebner.

Most of the more recent memories revolve around her absolute joy in being a grandmother. She shared pictures and stories of her sweet little boy. It was also so obvious how much she loved her husband and her son and her daughter-in-law.

My deepest condolences to them. A Canadian Poet, Thomas Campbell, wrote "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die." Patty will always be in my heart.

Eileen Minarik - July 24 at 07:57 PM



“ Dear Pat's family

Please accept my condolences for the loss of Pat. She was a wonderful person. I have many memories of her at Marygrove College. She was my roommate one year. I particularly remember her driving the five of us to the school where we were all student teaching. Every day we would eat out lunch in her kindergarten room and share the day's trials and tribulations. I will pray for you all.

Mary Trepanier-Street

Mary Trepanier-Street - July 24 at 07:52 PM



“ Mrs. Wilcox was a wonderful teacher, really helpful and kind. I have very fond memories of her from when I went to Graebner in the 80's. I am so very sorry for your loss.

Andrea Walton (Back) - July 24 at 07:10 PM



“ This is to Betty Ann...Your sister, Mary Patricia, and my sister, Cathy, were 15 days apart in age. I lost her when she was 52. The special relationship that you and Pat shared as you got “older” so touched my heart and gave HER such great joy. I am so glad you embraced each otherand LOVED the Tigers!

Linda Gerstenberger - July 24 at 06:08 PM



“ Each time I have tried to share my memories I am not able to continue because then it becomes more real. My heart aches trying to work through this loss. Yet, I smile through my tears remembering so many things about Mary Patricia. First and foremost was her love of children...ALL children but particularly her son, Eric, and her grandson, Nicholas. The joy her grandson brought to her was amazing. She so loved sharing little stories about him.

Her love for children made her a spectacular teacher. I know she made me a better

one. I so enjoyed working with her on curriculum and talking about kids. There weren't many times she was alone in her classroom after the children were gone because the younger teachers were always tapping into her insight and sharing their personal stories. Her room was the place to be.

I have been friends with Pat since the late 70's? I met her because I was friends with Bob and then she came to Graebner. She and Bob were the best together. They helped me through difficult times in my own life. She always invited my daughter Ashley, to come over and swim in the summer. She always told Ashley to bring a friend. Such happy times. Ashley loved "Miss Pat."

I will never forget when Pat insisted I go with them to Vegas the Christmas holiday after my husband passed. Wow! Just precious memories and a lot of laughter. She made me laugh a lot. Her sense of humor and sarcasm (in a good way) are unmatched. She pushed me to read more, learn more, and listen more. I will miss our dinners together when we would let it all out and truly enjoy each other's company. I will miss that she can't come to my cottage one more time. Just one more time. The date was The Republican Convention... enough said.... I LOVE THAT WOMAN. That woman from Buffalo...

Linda Gerstenberger (aka...Gersty/Kiddo)

Linda Gerstenberger - July 24 at 05:51 PM



“ Linda Gerstenberger is following this tribute.

Linda Gerstenberger - July 24 at 03:47 PM



“ I had the privilege and honor of working with Pat my first 13 years of teaching at Graebner. I was lucky that she was my mentor teacher and answered every question that I had, and let me tell you I had A LOT! I wore a path into the carpet between our two classrooms and she always had an answer for me. What an outstanding role model to have as a mentor teacher. I will always cherish our Sunday mornings at Graebner lesson planning for the upcoming week. Many times these mornings would turn to sports talk and our hopes and dreams of a Lions/Bills Super Bowl or a Tigers World Series. Another tradition that we shared was taking our old yearbooks to the high school graduation and watching our former students walk across that stage to receive their diplomas. The admiration and respect that parents and students had for Pat was awe-inspiring! The Graebner community will never be the same w/o her and the world has lost a gem. My deepest sympathy to Bob, Eric, & Nicholas.

Chad Rojeski - July 24 at 01:30 PM

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“ I would like to extend my deepest sympathy on the passing of Pat - we attended Marygrove College together - prayers for all.
Sincerely, Jo Anne Zierolf Vincent

Jo Anne - July 24 at 01:18 PM



“ We are so sorry to hear about Pat. Sending you all a virtual hug.

Dan, Cindy, & Kayla Kaiser - July 24 at 11:49 AM



“ Thoughts and prayers for the Wilcox family! Will miss seeing Pat come to our salon and listening to her speak of many topics! Such a wonderful person!

Joyce F - July 24 at 11:26 AM



“ Bob & Pat were always joined at the hip with us as we frequently ran into each on Hwy 401 on our trips to/from Buffalo. It will be a lonely road now.

But we always thought of Pat as our Den Mother for the Quincy Hilton Gang and always will

Jim & Pat Schultz - July 24 at 10:55 AM



“ Our hearts are broken today to hear this sad news. Bob, Eric and Little Nicholas we are so sorry for your loss. Pat was a beautiful person; she had a great sense of humor, loved life and was so kind to others. She had a tremendous love for her family which she shared with a smile. Our prayers and love are with you today. Rich and Gina

Gina Repko - July 24 at 10:43 AM



“ Bob, Eric and family, my deepest sympathy to you all. My heart is broken. The world has lost a truly special lady. I am blessed to have known Pat for so many years. My children were fortunate to have Pat as a teacher at Graebner. She was an amazing, dedicated teacher who always went above and beyond. She was influential in not only my children's lives but the lives of so many that had the pleasure of knowing her. I will miss seeing her at restaurants and church. She was such a passionate and kind person and will be missed greatly but her spirit will live on. Sending you and your

family our love and keeping you in our thoughts and prayers.



Mary Jo Jones - July 24 at 10:29 AM



“ Mrs. Wilcox was my 6th grade teacher and one of my very favorite teachers of all time. My nephew went to Graebner and I was always so excited to see her up there with him. She was a wonderful woman and teacher

Shannon Scheloske (Demeshko) - July 24 at 10:05 AM



“ Kelley, Kyle and Parker Keeley purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Pat Wilcox.



Kelley, Kyle and Parker Keeley - July 24 at 10:04 AM



“ Pat was the wife of my principal at Messmore. The times we had an opportunity to be together, she was so smart and vibrant and funny and warm and understanding. It was clear that she was deeply loved by her husband, my principal, Mr. Bob Wilcox. I particularly recall my first Christmas party at their house when Pat pulled me aside and said to me, "Just laugh, Kelley". See, I had all these Christmas lights out in my classroom which caused a few headaches for Bob. When it came time to prank each other with gifts at the Christmas party, I received a string of Christmas lights! Pat was watching out for me to make sure I understood that this was meant to be funny and to not take it the wrong way as a first year teacher at Messmore. Whenever our paths crossed whether it be at school or for social event at her house, Pat was so kind to me. I am so moved by all of the amazing tributes written by her former students, colleagues, parents, friends, etc. She was beloved to all in her life. Bob, my heart breaks for you. Please know that I am thinking of you and of all the many, many people that loved Pat so and that you will be in my thoughts and prayers. I lost my father to whom I was extremely close to almost exactly a year ago and the pain of his loss has been exquisitely unbearable. I have spent so much time with my Mom and

understand the process of grief and how for the longest time, everything feels meaningless. Hang in there, Bob. You have so many people that love and care about you. My deepest and sincere condolences. As you once said to me and something I continued to live by in a huge way, "This too shall pass".

Kelley Keeley - July 24 at 09:47 AM



“ My deepest condolences to Bob, Eric and family. Pat was an amazingly passionate woman who touched the lives of so many. She was an inspiration. Pat and I shared excitement about becoming grandmas as we counted down grandbaby arrivals together. We shared anger and frustration as we wrote postcards to representatives together over a drink. I will always remember Pat's endless drive to spread love and justice. She will be greatly missed.

Michelle Bienkowski - July 24 at 09:13 AM



“ Of all the teachers my son has had over the years she was my favorite and I know Kaden would tell you the same. What a great person. She will be very missed by many.

cassandra pasque - July 24 at 09:09 AM



“ Gina and I are devastated. She was an amazing person that we got to know and love when we met her in college. She always went out of her way to help anyone that needed a hand. We will miss her and pray to God she is in a good place.

Bob and Eric are thoughts are with you.

Richard Repko - July 24 at 09:03 AM



“ Dear Bob, Eric and family-
I was so sorry to hear of Pat's illness and passing. Pat was a wonderful and loving person. She was kind, attentive and loving to everyone she met. She was passionate about her family and the children she worked with. She always gave her best and never tired of doing more for people. She had a wonderful and wicked sense of humor and was quick witted, especially when someone was too full of themselves. I considered her a very special person.

I will keep her in my prayers. May God Bless her family and all of you who are suffering from her loss right now. May you find comfort in the happy times you were able to share with this wonderful woman.

Marie Smith - July 24 at 12:54 AM



“ Mr Wilcox, On behalf of the entire Trigger family, please accept our condolences. It was a pleasure to have you as my children's principal, as well as you and your wife as coworkers for UCS. Our prayers and thoughts are with you and your entire family during this difficult time. We remember Pat, fondly.

Barbara Trigger - July 23 at 11:31 PM



“ Omg Ms Wilcox was my favorite teacher at Graebner Elementary! She was always pushing me to be better, she truly believed in each student raising to the next level, but also had a great sense of humor. She was the teacher who made me fall in love with history, and for sure played a part in my decision to become a teacher. She was such a blessing to every student who had her.

Rachel - July 23 at 09:53 PM



“ I was lucky enough to have Mrs. Wilcox as a teacher at Graebner. She was, without a doubt, my favorite teacher I ever had. She challenged me, made me laugh, and was always someone I could go to if I needed anything. She was a great sport as I would give her a hard time about the Bills and she would always go out of her way to make class or visiting the library interesting and enjoyable. It makes me smile thinking of all those memories and also all the other comments here from all the other students she touched during her many great years as an educator.

My condolences to the family.

Nick Teshich - July 23 at 08:07 PM



“ My heart is breaking for the Wilcox Family. Pat was such a vivacious, vibrant person who was genuinely interested in people and was so very dedicated to her students and her fellow teachers. You could always count on Pat to be involved in activities that affected the learning conditions of students, unless she and Bob were climbing volcanoes in Hawaii! Her star will shine brightly over all of us.

Susan George - July 23 at 07:51 PM



“ Mrs. Wilcox helped foster my love of reading early on. I have lots of memories checking out Library books after she had read our class a story. I was most proud in 6th grade painting a ceiling tile that hung above Mrs. Wilcox library! Condolences to her family! She was a wonderful educator!

Nick - July 23 at 06:58 PM



“ Mrs. Wilcox was more than a teacher and made such an impact on my life and so many others. I remember in 5th grade, she told our class that she prayed that we would never have to experience a war in our lifetime. The next year was 9/11 and she came into our classroom, turned the TV on, talked to us and answered our questions as best as she could. She wasn't even our teacher at the time, but she cared so deeply that we were listened to and taken care of. Any time that my Mom had a "scary doctor's appointment" she would pull me out of the classroom and tell me that everything went ok so I didn't have to spend the rest of the day worrying. I realize now that it takes a really special person to do that. And even after she retired as a teacher, she attended rallies and fought right along side them to speak out against cuts in pay, student resources, art and gym classes and access to counselors. I hope she knows how inspiring and influential she was to all of her students and anyone that was lucky enough to know her. I will remember her fondly.

Katie Mielke - July 23 at 05:47 PM



“ Bob & family, I am so sorry for your loss. Pat was a dedicated educator who will be missed by the many lives she touched.



Jim Steere - July 23 at 05:42 PM



“ Mrs Wilcox was truly one of the best teachers I had growing up. She had a way about her that not many did. She'd be stern, but kind all at once. I can remember the sundays passing her un church and she'd always give me the peace sign. Even passing in the hallways of the school as I'd look up from my desk, there would be that peace sign. The world has lost a great woman, but she left her mark on a lot of us

Michael Plotzke - July 23 at 05:18 PM



“ I consider myself very lucky to have known Pat. She was a very good friend and wonderful teacher. My thoughts, prayers, and heart go out to Bob and family.

Joseph Miracola - July 23 at 05:15 PM



“ Pat was an amazing teacher and lovely mentor. I was lucky to have her guidance and to learn from her as a student teacher. Lots of love and prayers to Bob and her family.

Shawna Veit - July 23 at 05:15 PM



“ AS I would refer to her, Mary Pat. was an excellent dedicated, devoted, teacher. In Utica, she began her career at Schwarzkoff Elementary where I had the choice of hiring her as her first principal. Simply, she was one of the very best teachers Utica had as an elementary teacher!!! Our prayers and special thoughts go to the family. Blessings,
Dick and Sandy LaBaere

Richard LaBaere - July 23 at 05:12 PM



“ I feel lucky and blessed beyond measure that this amazing women was my friend. She was a friend, colleague and second mom to me as well. We shared many hours of conversations about life. We had many life experiences in common. She often told me how much I reminded her of herself. That is an amazing complement. I was lucky to share Vegas with her 3 times. She was the very first person I got to tell I was engaged and show my ring because she was there! She introduced me to one of our favorite restaurants, Batista´s Hole in the Wall. She also tried to teach me Craps. Pat was so dedicated and supportive to her family, friends, and her students. Sending love to Bob, Eric, Karen,Nicholas, and all those who love her.

Nicole Terenzi - July 23 at 04:59 PM



“ Mrs. Wilcox has touched many, many lives and has changed them all for the better! My son transferred from private to public in 5th grade and was blessed to have Mrs. Wilcox for his teacher. She helped make the transition easy and made my son feel special. We love her! She will be missed! May she rest in peace!

Kathy Daley - July 23 at 04:49 PM



“ Like many, both my girls were fortunate enough to be placed with Mrs Wilcox at Graebner. She is the one teacher that stands out for both of them. What a mark she made on so many young lives. She and I continued through FB and I enjoyed her many postings. We share a kindred spirit there and when I place my vote this November I will think of Pat. She was a truly proud Grandmother. Rest now. My thoughts are with her family.

Elaine Luft - July 23 at 04:33 PM



“ Bob, Eric and family-I 'm so sorry for your loss. She was such a special person.

Gail M. Schulte - July 23 at 04:18 PM



“ Sending my deepest condolences. Mrs. Wilcox was one of my most memorable teachers. She always pushed me to go above and beyond what I thought I could do. Her dedication and honesty will always be remembered by many. I enjoyed my visits with her as an adult at Graebner and I know my sister, Christine, did as well. Til today, whenever I hear "New York, New York" by Frank Sinatra I think of her. She will be dearly missed.

♡ Jenny Gerrick Ridings

Jenifer Gerrick Ridings - July 23 at 03:37 PM



“ I Have You in My Heart Memorial Throw was purchased for the family of Pat Wilcox.



July 23 at 03:08 PM



“ Bob and Eric and family, I cannot express my condolences enough. Mary Pat was an amazing woman, teacher and friend. Years after having her as teacher, visits to her home were frequent. Education discussions and general talk about current events were always on tap on the deck and then in many venues after I became an educator.

Her life was so impactful to many. She loved her “job” and it showed. I cannot imagine a world without her. Her legacy is instilled in sooo many. Love and prayers,
Nick Russo

Nick Russo - July 23 at 03:06 PM



“ The world is a better place because of all the lives this beautiful woman touched. Forever thankful my girls had her for a teacher. Keeping Mrs. Wilcox’s family in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Colleen Brown - July 23 at 03:04 PM



“ This is Heartbreaking! Both of my Children had Mrs. Wilcox and I loved how she wanted to be portrayed as the “Strict” teacher!! She by far was the Best Teacher that my kids ever had!! She loved her Husband and was so excited to become a Grandma!! You will never be forgotten!! Morgan and Matthew still talk about you!!



Julie Evans - July 23 at 02:56 PM



“ Pat was my 1st grade teacher in the late 70's. I have nothing but fond memories of her. So sorry to hear of her passing. My deepest condolences.

Melissa Tolstyka - July 23 at 02:39 PM



“ Pat will always be know you me as “Mrs. Wilcox” as she was a beloved teacher for our girls. She sparked a passion for learning in all of her students. I am forever grateful to her for every word of encouragement she would comment or message to

each member of our family, long after they were her student. As everyone knows, she was a highly sought attendee at HS grad parties. How many elementary school teachers continue that type of mentoring relationship long after their students stop being in her classroom? She was a rare and truly inspirational person. I am deeply saddened that such a beautiful, smart, giving human being is gone. I will miss you, friend

Beth Gougeon - July 23 at 02:35 PM



“ Known to me

Beth - July 23 at 02:36 PM



“ Mrs. Wilcox is one of few teachers from my elementary years at Graebner that truly stands out to me. I remember her being firm and taking nothing from anyone. But I learned a lot and if you had a question she NEVER turned you away!! She will definitely be missed.

Corey Wisniewski - July 23 at 02:33 PM



“ Pat was a dear friend, mentor, colleague, and second mother to me. She was like another grandma to my own kids. She taught me so many things and I'm a better person for knowing her and having her in my life. She will be missed more than ever, but never, never forgotten!!! Love you, my friend!!

Kristina Shaum - July 23 at 01:29 PM



“ Pat not only taught and encouraged children, she was responsible for educating me as I worked alongside her at Graebner. She never stopped teaching, always found answers for any question and cared about everyone. I will miss her.

Darlene Swoveland - July 23 at 01:21 PM



“ This beautiful woman touched the lives of many. A dear friend, mentor, colleague and like a mother. Her love, knowledge, humor, leadership and support will forever be missed. Love you Pat.

Diana - July 23 at 01:17 PM