



Donna J. Snell

May 28, 1939 - April 7, 2026

Donna Jean Snell, age 86, of Royal Oak, passed away on April 7, 2026.

Donna was born on May 28, 1939, in Detroit, Michigan to Walter and Alma Bellhorn. She was raised in Detroit, where her lifelong faith, love of learning, and dedication to service first took root.

Donna attended Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois, where she earned her teaching certificate. Education and ministry were central to her life from an early age. Her parents operated the Lutheran School of the Deaf, and Donna was deeply involved in its mission. She developed a lasting passion for sign language and the community it served, carrying that commitment throughout her life.

She began her career as a teacher, spending nearly a decade nurturing young learners at Trinity Lutheran School in Mt. Clemens, where she taught kindergarten. Later, she transitioned into accounting and worked for 20 years at Ameritech.

Donna's faith was the cornerstone of her life. Coming from a family that included many Lutheran pastors, she was a lifelong and devoted Lutheran who lived her beliefs daily. As she often demonstrated alongside her family, "if the church doors were open, the Bellhorns were there." Since 1968, she was

a dedicated member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Royal Oak, where she faithfully participated in worship and church life.

Music brought Donna great joy. She loved singing in choirs and was an accomplished musician, playing piano, organ, and handbells. Her love of music was both a personal passion and an expression of her faith.

Donna also found happiness in life's simple pleasures. She was an avid reader who delighted in browsing used bookstores. She had a fondness for chocolate, potato chips, and cookies, and she treasured long phone conversations and email exchanges with her cousins, keeping close ties with her extended family.

In the early 1960s, Donna met the love of her life, Edward. The two were married in 1964 and shared a beautiful and devoted 50-year marriage filled with travel and companionship. They especially enjoyed taking cruises together. Edward passed away on the day of their 50th wedding anniversary, marking both a poignant and meaningful milestone in Donna's life.

Family was deeply important to Donna. She cherished time with her great-grandchildren, always eager to listen to their stories and share in their lives.

Donna will be remembered for her steadfast faith, her love of music and learning, her devotion to family, and her warm, faithful presence in the lives of all who knew her.

Donna is survived by her son, Steven (the late Barbara) Snell; her grandchildren, Benjamin (Susan) Jasmund, Tebeth Snell, and Timothy (Melissa) Snell; and her great-grandchildren, Jacob Jasmund, Lukas Snell, and Hannah Snell. She is also survived by her sister, Janice (Daniel) Fienen. She was preceded in death by her husband, Edward and her brothers, Roy

(Margaret) Bellhorn and Dean (Sue) Bellhorn.

Visitation for Donna will be held on Sunday, April 12, from 2 - 8 p.m. at Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors, 705 W. Eleven Mile Rd. (four blocks east of Woodward), Royal Oak. The funeral service for Donna will be held on Monday, April 13 at 11:00 a.m. (in-state 10:00 a.m.) at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 202 E. Fifth Street, Royal Oak.

Memorial contributions in memory of Donna can be directed to the Music Ministry at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Royal Oak.

Share a memory at www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com.

Cemetery Details

Oakview Cemetery

1032 N. Main Street
(south of 12 Mile Road)
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 12. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak
705 W. Eleven Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Funeral Service

APR 13. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul Lutheran Church
202 E. Fifth Street
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Tribute Wall

JP

“ I always enjoyed her visits to Florida for the Bellhorn reunion and one day she came over to my house and played my favorite piece of music “Toccata and fugue in D minor “ and by heart it was beautiful. We will miss you and your visits. RIP with the Lord

Joyce Peacock - April 18 at 08:49 AM

ES

“ Steve,

Unfortunately my husband and I will not be able to attend your mother’s funeral. However I wanted you to know that she has been a special friend to me for many years. We first met over 65 years ago in college. After graduation we lived together for a short time until she married. We got together with Donna and Ed occasionally, once when they were living in Florida. In recent years we met for lunch, but much of our contact has been by phone and email. I will miss her. Our good wishes and prayers are with you and your family.

Ellen

Ellen Skuta - April 12 at 07:23 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Donna J. Snell.*



April 11 at 09:31 AM

FB

“ Every time we visited MI coming from our home now in FL, we would take Donna out to dinner at her favorite restaurant, Red Robin, which is one of our favorites too. We enjoyed visiting with her while eating dinner.

Florence Bellhorn - April 10 at 05:45 PM

LD

"My Cuz" - She's been there always, such an admired older cousin who always included me, raising our kids together, singing in the choir, "gabfests" at Red Robin & our last visits. Always smiling & strong in her faith. Love & miss you Donna

Linda Dondero - April 11 at 02:16 PM

BB

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Brian Bellhorn - April 09 at 10:17 AM

BB

“ One of my favorite memories is sitting next to Aunt Donna in church when she started to sing along with the hymn. People in other rows were turning to see who was making such beautiful sounds!

She also wins the award for "Most Multi-state Family Reunions Attended!"

--Brian Bellhorn

Brian Bellhorn - April 09 at 10:12 AM

JY

I remember Donna trying to soothe me as a child, saying that the thunder was only the angels bowling! I will miss her greatly.

Jan y - April 10 at 03:30 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donna J. Snell.*



April 09 at 09:14 AM