



Karen Lorraine Charles

August 26, 1943 - May 1, 2025

Karen Lorraine Charles (nee McKenzie), age 81, was called home by her Lord on May 1, 2025.

She suffered a 15-month battle with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis she had bravely endured through faithful prayer in her Lord's presence and His Grace given. Covid in January 2024 left her this terminal disease, Fibrosis, destroying her lung capacity to breathe without oxygen.

Preceding Karen in passing on January 15, 2024, was the love of her life, her heartthrob, her most precious husband of 54 years, Donald. Her grief and loneliness for her "Charlie" never faded. Karen and Don lovingly named each other "Charlie" and "Lil Charlie". They exchanged marital vows September 27, 1969 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Clawson, MI. Karen was a resident of Shelby Twp, MI for 44 years. Her ancestry is half Norwegian and Scottish, Irish.

Karen was born August 26, 1943 in the small farm town of Ladysmith, Wisconsin to parents Elmer and Hazel McKenzie (nee Moksnes). At age 1, her Mom via railroad took baby Karen to Michigan where Dad was waiting for his young family with a new job in Detroit. Soon thereafter they made a new home briefly in Hamtramck then relocating to Hazel Park and eventually moving to Clawson. She left Hazel Park High mid-term senior year in the top of her classmates and graduated from Clawson High to finish school there also in top of her classmates. Karen graduated in 1961 and was first chair clarinet in high school band. She was very smart!!

Dearest family surviving Karen is heartbroken sister Marlene Nock (dec. Earl), brother-in-law Lester Charles (dec. Betts), many nieces and nephews of families: Charles, Krebiehl and Swann, kin to her husband, Donald. Karen's other most loved preceding her in death are her treasured sweet parents Elmer and Hazel, her dearest Aunt Bea Holman, in-laws: Pete and Shirley Krebiehl, Sandy and Ken Swann. Her spoiled Sheltie-Collie mix of 13 years was always missed, Nikki. Don's and Her's little baby dog.

Karen began a 41-year career at Detroit Bank and Trust, now known as Comerica, and ultimately was the Head Teller at Rochester-Avon branch in Rochester for 32 years retiring in 2002. She rejected management position promotions as she loved her job in the Backoffice serving all statuses of clientele, supervising her teller staff of 12 at times who did the hard work of keeping the branch operationally exceptional and opting rather for free weekends than to a bank management obligation; she and Don preferred their cottage retreats. Karen had full admiration of her expertise in all bank operations from the clientele, tellers and management alike. Everyone knew who kept the boat afloat! The tellers adored Karen and lovingly called her either Ma, Chuck or Charlie and the customers loved her too for her big smiles, warm welcomes, fun nature and sweet caring self. So many lifelong friendships of Karen's developed from both staff and clientele because of the wonderfully unique kind and fun person she was to each.

Cherishing Karen's precious memory deep in their hearts are family friends of she and Don's from many decades of true companionship, devotion and love through all the joys and trials of each other's lives sharing as a family rather than mere friends are families: Vien, Kulawik, Bastien, Cauley and O'Donnell. Karen and Don love their friends' children and grandchildren as if they were their own kids with a depth for each one in their hearts.

Karen and Don both loved to golf; travelled winters to Florida and South Carolina for 15 years having a great time on the course, at the beach or dining out with old friends and joys of making new ones. Las Vegas too was a regular fun trip with friends for years, never to "hit it big", but had big fun in

togetherness roaming the sunny Strip of Vegas making memories. Their northern Michigan cottage of many decades was a regular escapade of golfing, snowmobiling, playing cards, sitting by the bomb fire, Bar-B-Q-ing or cozy fireplace chats with friends and family. Great times with Karen and Don also were always had in their home. As a couple they synchronized so well together offering the best of themselves with fun, laughter, love and joyful camaraderie. Karen's other fun favorites included dining out with friends and shopping at the mall, especially to satisfy her shoe fetish. She had a keen sense for current fashions and always looked her sharpest: clothes, hair, jewelry and makeup. She had a talent decorating her home in furnishings and colors as cozy and warm as her heart that oozed, "Welcome to our home." Of all these about Karen's lifetime: birth, illness, ancestry, career, talents, adventures and favorites what is most notable is who she was as a loving adoring wife, devoted dear daughter and sister, and a one-in-a-million-friend... is to have experienced the overwhelming totality of her sweet tender loving soul. Karen was truly special, a blessed gift of God to us all in how He uniquely created her amazing loveable heart of gold: lovingly selfless, thoughtfully kindhearted, generously forgiving, naturally charitable, appropriately patient, compassionately listened, guided gently, deeply empathized, shared her glistening hazel greenish eyes and a beautiful happy smile to uplift you, quietly prayed for others and always offered herself whole heartedly showing her Christ like love. We now find our own peace knowing Karen's loving soul lives for eternity with her Lord among Heaven's Angels, Don her "Charlie", her parents and all whom she sought reunion and Karen is alas free of her disease. Glory be to God! Sing praises of His Mercy! Karen's wishes for a Lutheran memorial service and burial of her cremated remains at White Chapel Memorial Park in Troy, Michigan to be held on Saturday, June 21, 2025 at 2:30pm. In lieu of flowers, a gift to charity of your choice in Karen's memory is graciously appreciated.

Cemetery Details

White Chapel Memorial Cemetery

621 W. Long Lake Road
Troy, MI 48098

Previous Events

Committal Service at Cemetery

JUN 21. 2:30 PM (ET)

White Chapel Memorial Cemetery
621 W. Long Lake Road
Troy, MI 48098

Tribute Wall

WB

“ *My family will miss Karen deeply.
If you knew Karen, you knew she was always
a half hour late. We called it “Karen time”
She always sent her food at least once.
She was a great Yahtzee player and could
play all-night long.
She rode motorcycles and snowmobiles.
She was a great golfer.
Loved going to the cabin.
She love Nikki, her fur child
She loved Donna Summer and played it every time we came over.
Her and Donald would spend a month down south near my parents
and hang out and have fun.
She loved Donald and she loved Sheryl to the moon and back.
Karen and Donald were only separated for a short time, but are now
together.*

*Don't take family for granted, Family time goes by too fast. Cherish
one another.*



Wendy Beebe - June 20, 2025 at 04:08 PM

SO

“ I am so going to miss my Best Forever Friend of 47 years, Karen. My heart aches that she suffered so much her last year here with us grieving the loss of her Donald and enduring such a horrible debilitating lung disease from Covid. Karen was such a vibrant youthful fun person, so full of life and energy all the years we were friends. Her heart was truly full of love, kindness and generosity for so many people, her personality was a one-of-a-kind genuine caring lady open to sharing the best of herself always to family and friends. I consider Karen and her Donald my family, not by that of blood but of our hearts' connection made of God's grace to unite our families' journeys in joys and trials. She is an eternal gift of mine for a multitude of blessings that are cherished within my heart and memory forever. Her final earthly trial is over, she conquered through faith, and she lives with her Lord glorified and renewed with Him. Rest well my precious friend, I know you are before Him in awe of His peace. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you are and always will be to me. Your BFF, Sherrie Lynn xo

Sheryl O'Donnell - May 12, 2025 at 11:21 AM

MB

“ Madison Barclay lit a candle in memory of Karen Lorraine Charles



Madison Barclay - May 09, 2025 at 01:40 PM

SO

“ *Sheryl L. O'Donnell sent a virtual gift in memory of Karen Lorraine Charles*



Sheryl L. O'Donnell - May 08, 2025 at 08:55 AM

SO

Karen asked me to pray with her in her home and in the hospital for her Donald and for herself. I pray with her still today and to her as she is now an Angel, and advocate for us all to pray to and with.

Sheryl L. O'Donnell - May 08, 2025 at 08:59 AM

SO

“ *Sheryl L. O'Donnell lit a candle in memory of Karen Lorraine Charles*



Sheryl L. O'Donnell - May 08, 2025 at 08:53 AM

SO

Like a perpetual lit candle Karen remains within my heart forever and always

Sheryl L. O'Donnell - May 08, 2025 at 08:56 AM