

Colleen Monfore Obituary 4/20/25



Colleen Carol Monfore, 68, of Holland, Michigan, passed away unexpectedly on September 26, 2024, while scuba diving in Indonesia.

Colleen was born in Yankton, South Dakota on September 5, 1956, to Don and Maureen Moriarty. She grew up in the nearby small town of Springfield, South Dakota, where her father owned a local variety store named The Trading Post. Colleen was the oldest of five children, including three sisters and one brother. She enjoyed a happy childhood with a loving family. She began working in her father's store as soon as she could see over the counter, developing a keen sense of service and experience working with people. She attended Springfield Grade School and High School, growing up with a familiar group of classmates and friends.

On June 20, 1970, just before her freshman year in High School, she was introduced by her father to a young man named Mike, who had just moved to town. Essentially from that moment, a special bond was formed between them, and she eventually married Michael Monfore on February 17, 1979. Colleen was an active Girl Scout and in 1971, at age 14, she achieved their highest rank of First Class. She was also a member of the school band, specializing in the clarinet, and played the piano. Following graduation from high school in 1974, Colleen earned a 2-year associate's degree in business from the University of South Dakota/Springfield. In the summer of 1976, she worked in the jewelry store at the world-famous Wall Drug, in Wall, South Dakota. While in this role, she made the largest single sale in the history of the store, a testament to her retail experience.

In 1978, on the eighth anniversary of their first introduction, Mike and Colleen became engaged and were married the following year. Later in 1979, Colleen took scuba diving lessons and received her first diving certification. In her words, she was, "Tired of sitting on the shore watching the bubbles come up." In 1980, Colleen gave birth to a daughter, Kathleen Marie, followed by a son, Robert James, in 1984.

In 1985, the family moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, where Mike had accepted a job at the Kellogg Company. Colleen subsequently joined the Human Resources staff of the local automotive supplier Hi-Lex, where she worked for 14 years, eventually taking over the role of HR Manager. During this period, Colleen attended classes at Western Michigan University, earning her bachelor's degree in business in 1989.

It was also during this time Colleen and Mike began traveling internationally on scuba diving adventures. In 1999, the family moved to Holland, Michigan, where Colleen held Human Resources leadership roles at Johnson Controls, RDV Corporation, and Granger Group before retiring in 2018. During her

accomplished work career, Colleen built a strong reputation as a skilled and disciplined professional, with exceptional knowledge in her field.

During her years in Holland, Colleen was an active member of both Our Lady of the Lake and St. Francis de Sales parishes. She enjoyed singing alto for many years in the Our Lady of the Lake choir. Retirement brought more time to travel and time to enjoy her grandchildren. Throughout the years, Colleen and Mike traveled extensively. They made dozens of scuba diving trips to the Caribbean, Red Sea, South Pacific and other locations, including a trip to the Galapagos Islands. Colleen also encouraged non-diving vacations, to places such as Australia, Costa Rica, Hawaii, Bali, Egypt, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Colleen was an enthusiastic world traveler, excitedly embracing diverse cultures. She loved to try local foods and learn local customs. She was a very experienced and skilled scuba diver, who embraced the underwater world. She found peace in the serenity and beauty of a coral reef, marveling at the many exotic creatures she encountered, including sharks, manta rays, and dolphins.

Colleen was a deeply religious person, with a strong devotion to charity and serving others. She was a frequent volunteer at Kids' Food Basket. Colleen was a loving companion, friend, wife, mother, and grandmother. She and Mike were married for 45 years and were an "item" for 54 years. Those who spent time with Colleen were drawn to her gentle and kind nature. She had a beaming smile, and never met an elephant she didn't like. Colleen was an avid collector of vintage children's books, which she delighted in reading to her grandchildren. She took great pleasure in watching and feeding birds, along with rock hunting on Michigan beaches.

Colleen is survived by her husband Michael, daughter Kathleen (Anthony) Pacheco (Goshen, KY), and son Robert (Sarah) Monfore (Vicksburg, MI). Her grandchildren include Isabelle, Olivia, and Vivian Pacheco (Goshen, KY), and Jake and Faye Monfore (Vicksburg, MI). Her surviving siblings are sisters Erin Lange (Sioux City, IA) and Denise Schwebach (Sioux Falls, SD). Colleen was preceded in death by her parents, Don and Maureen Moriarty, her sister Diane Freeman, and her brother Brad Moriarty.

A special thank you is directed to Colleen's dear friends from the GRACE Book Club and the Our Lady of the Lake Choir. Their assistance in preparing for her funeral service was invaluable.

DO NOT GRIEVE FOR ME

Don't grieve for me, for I'm free,
I'm following paths God made for me.

I took his hand, I heard him call,
then turned, and bid farewell to all.

I could not stay another day
to laugh, to love, to sing, to play,
tasks left undone must stay that way.

I found my peace... at close of play
and if my parting left a void,
then fill it with remembered joy.

A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss
ah yes, these things I too will miss.

Be not burdened... deep with sorrow,
I wish you sunshine of tomorrow.

My life's been full. I've savored much,
good friends, good times,
a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,
Don't lengthen it now with grief.

Lift up your heart and share with me,
God wants me now... he set me free.