



Darlene M. Bouchard

April 21, 1941 - December 10, 2024

Darlene Marie Bouchard, 83, passed away peacefully Tuesday evening, December 10th, 2024, where she resided in her final weeks in Bradley.

Born April 21, 1941, Darlene was born in Kankakee, IL, the only child of Rene “Frenchy” Bouchard and Elizabeth (Dauphin) Bouchard. She attended St. Joseph’s and graduated from Bishop McNamara. She was a self-made woman, bold, feisty, fearless, determined, and strongly independent, or as we put it, she was a Bouchard woman! She ran her own business her entire career – Darlene’s Have a Heart Dog Grooming Parlor. She retired as a dog groomer years after carpal tunnel restricted her hands.

While she did not have any biological children, she was a true Pet-Parent to the core. Over the years, she raised approximately 26 dogs, 1 senior rescue, and 2 cats. Among her fur-babies, a few held special places in her heart, Samoyeds, Dobermans Chipper & Cher, Shelties Duffy & Josie, Border collies Angel (senior rescue) & her best friend, Cori, and last fur-baby English Shepherd Kira, who was blessed to join a young active family.

From her mid 20’s she began a regular in the Dog Show circuit, participating & placing well in many of those events. She competed with her dogs in many shows across the country in the categories of Confirmation, Obedience, Agility & Flyball. She attended and later assisted in dog training classes amongst the South & West Chicagoland burbs. She had an incredibly special connection

with her Border collie, Cori. Together (and with the help of Mandi Lea) they achieved great scores, records for speed and distance work, in the Agility rings & Flyball competitions. She perfected her positive reinforcement approach to dog training, which paid off in spades! Darlene wrote and published a book about it – Unforgettable Cori, My Best Friend, a heartwarming story of their connection, training methods and accomplishments.

All in all, you can say her whole life went to the dogs, lol.

She is survived by her 1st cousins / closest friends Marlene (Bouchard) Dion & Carol (Bouchard) Anderson, Caretaker / “Adopted by the Heart” family: daughter Scarlett & Dave Mullikin & Ed Williams-Wilken, daughter Kitty & Greg Sill, grandchildren Jeremy & Elizabeth Parks, Mandi Lea & Brandon Anderson, Dakota Parks, Jennifer Noble, Pam Noble, Manda Noble & Bryan Centa, Erica Jo & Alexis Guzman, plus a collective of 9 great grandchildren. Her extended family would like to acknowledge her long-term Home Helper, Cilla W. & good friend Cindy T.

She was preceded in eternal life by both parents, Elizabeth and Rene Bouchard.

According to Darlene’s wishes, there will be a direct cremation. Later in the spring, to honor her birthday, there will be a Celebration of Life and burial near her parents at Mount Calvary in Kankakee, graveside rites led by Scarlett Mullikin.

In lieu of flowers, Donations toward her burial or Memorials may be made to the wishes of the family.

Tribute Wall

KW

“ *Kaye Wallace lit a candle in memory of Darlene M. Bouchard*



Kaye Wallace - December 23, 2024 at 03:49 PM

SS

“ *Stacy Stoll lit a candle in memory of Darlene M. Bouchard*



Stacy Stoll - December 18, 2024 at 07:08 PM

SM

“ *Scarlett Mullikin lit a candle in memory of Darlene M. Bouchard*



Scarlett Mullikin - December 18, 2024 at 06:32 PM

SM

“ From being my baby sitter as a young kid, to living with you & your folks part-time as a teenager, to say you had a significant role in my life was an understatement. I have fond memories of going to so many dog shows with you. You took me under your wing and taught me dog training, competitions, grooming, and how to run a business. You helped me through milestones of growing up and showed the love of a mother to me & my kids.

In return, I spent the past 20 years being there, taking care of you. I am glad I could be by your side through this last season of your life.

I love you and miss you terribly, but grateful that you are at peace now.

I am sure Cori was waiting for you & happy to be by your side for eternity.

*Love ya bunches,
Scarlett Mullikin*

Scarlett Mullikin - December 18, 2024 at 06:32 PM