



## Joanne Cecelia Hartnett

February 6, 1934 - September 18, 2025

How does one write an obituary of your mother? What is the protocol? What is the format? My mother didn't exactly follow the norm for her time, so I will write this using my own format, my own protocol — part obit part eulogy — to share a bit of my mom's story.

Joanne Cecelia Hartnett (née Mainville) died on September 18, 2025, in Traverse City, MI. She was 91 years old, and from where I sit, she had a long, full life. She worked hard and took care of herself and her kids. After a relatively short, but fierce, struggle with Alzheimer's, she died peacefully, safe, cared for, and loved, in a very natural order of things.

She is survived by her five children, David Hartnett (Denise) of Harbor Springs, MI., Suzanne Hartnett (Peter Lazansky) of Arcadia, MI., Clarisse Hartnett Manny of Traverse City, MI., Steven Hartnett (Sue Lynn) of Aptos, CA., and Erich Hartnett (Kristy) of Littleton, CO.; and her sister Rhoda Perkins (Robert) of Eden Prairie, MN. She also leaves five grandchildren, Rylan Hartnett (Theresa Sherwood), Miles Hartnett (Shalyn), Jaclyn Gottlieb (Michael), Grace Hartnett, and Andre Hartnett; and 5 great-grandchildren, Zoe

and Calvin Hartnett, Morgan and Lydia Hartnett, and Ruby Gottlieb. She was preceded in death by her husband, Daniel André Hartnett, and her parents, Esther (Bergman) Mainville and Roderick L. Mainville.

An intense Michigander she was — born in Detroit in 1934 and growing up in Dearborn, MI. She spoke

fondly of her early years in Dearborn, which included shopping trips to Hudson's with her mother,

listening to the Detroit Tigers on the radio with her friends, bowling, tennis, and winning the Girls

Athletic Association award for outstanding athlete at Dearborn High School.

She had a group of friends

from Dearborn whom she remained close to throughout her life.

Joanne earned a journalism degree from the University of Michigan, where she worked on the Michigan

Daily newspaper. While in college, she met and married Daniel André Hartnett in 1955. After graduation,

they moved to Detroit and started their family. Living in Detroit in the 1960s, she earned her Master's

Degree in Education (Marygrove College) and began a career as a teacher/reading specialist working in

Detroit public schools and later Dearborn Heights schools. The family moved to Plymouth, MI, in 1968. A

few years later, her husband was diagnosed with kidney disease; a hemodialysis machine was installed in

their home and for the next two years, Joanne ran his treatment sessions—six hours at a time, three

times a week—while continuing to work full time and raise the kids.

Her husband died in 1975, leaving Joanne and her five children, ages 9-17.

She then decided to go to

law school, working as a teacher by day and hammering out law school at

night. Somehow, she still managed to attend the kids' basketball games, school band concerts, and early-Saturday morning hockey practices. She graduated from Detroit College of Law in 1980, was admitted to the State Bar of Michigan in 1981 and opened her own practice. She loved the law. After her retirement, she would carry a pocket-sized edition of the US Constitution and Bill of Rights. And, if a conversation with friends took a certain turn, she would pull that little book out of her purse and say, "Show me where it says that?"

That's my mom—that's the Michigan woman she was.

In the 1980s, she moved up-north to Gaylord, MI, opened a small law office, and lived in a log cabin in the woods with her German Shepherd. After some years, she'd had enough of life in the woods, closed her law office and moved to Harbor Springs MI to be closer to her childhood friends and to enjoy the best of northern Michigan—camping in the Upper Peninsula, walking the Mackinac Bridge on Labor Day, enjoying her favorite hamburgers and fudge in Mackinaw City, frequenting the Harbor Springs library and keeping in shape with a regular cadence of swimming at Harbor Springs High School.

Like many of us from Michigan, my mom was a Lions fan, a Tigers fan, a Pistons fan, and a Red Wings fan.

She spent many football Saturdays in Ann Arbor cheering on her beloved Michigan Wolverines. She cheered for all University of Michigan teams, but also supported other Big Ten school teams (when they

weren't playing Michigan). She and my sisters had an annual tradition of going to March Madness basketball games together. It was never just about watching a particular team; it was about watching college basketball.

My mom was intelligent, independent, a skeptic, and sometimes a curmudgeon, but she was never anything other than herself. She would not provide her personal information to anything online, "They don't need to know anything about me," she'd say. She read the Detroit Free Press daily — I suggested she read the online version, but she said absolutely not, she wanted a paper copy to read while she enjoyed her coffee. Even with Alzheimer's these last few years, she retained her wit, her love of sports, and her joy of having a cup of coffee while reading the Detroit Free Press. Michiganders are tough people. My mom was from Michigan, went to Michigan, and never wanted to leave Michigan—not for anything, not for anyone. I am the youngest of her children, now 59, and living in Colorado. I asked her to come join me in Colorado—the weather, the snow, the sun — but she would say, "Nah, I'm good." And when I pressed her—why won't you just move out here? She told me straight up: "Because this is where I'm from."

That was her—that's the Michigan woman she was. Michiganders lost one of our own in September. Her friends know, and her kids know that Joanne C. Hartnett was from Michigan -- Detroit, Dearborn, Plymouth, Gaylord, Harbor Springs, and Traverse City. All Michigan places, and she loved them all.

Because that's where she was from.

Per her emphatic instructions, there will be no funeral or memorial services.

Her cremated remains will

be interred at Riverside Cemetery in Plymouth next to her husband. The

family would like to thank the

staff at Cherry Hill Haven of Traverse City and Hospice of Michigan for their

compassionate and dignified

care. For those who may want to remember Joanne with a donation, please

consider Cherry Hill Haven's

"The Lifetime Promise" fund (<https://baruchsls-ch-traverse-city.kindful.com/>) or

Hospice of Michigan

(<https://www.hom.org/>)

Arrangements were made by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home, our family serving

yours.

# Tribute Wall



“ 7 files added to the album J Hartnett photos



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**Suzanne Hartnett** - November 18, 2025 at 11:00 AM