



Susan Joyce Smelker

March 11, 1952 - December 26, 2025

Susan Joyce Smelker, died on Friday, Dec 26, 2025 after a long and well-lived struggle with cancer. She is survived by her beloved husband of fifty-three years, Michael Smelker; her children, Jeremy (Kimberley) Smelker, Christopher (Tonya) Smelker, and Emily (Kevin) Adams; her grandchildren, Taylor, Austin, Braeden, Andrew, Greyson, Sara, Isaac, and Isabel; two brothers, three sisters, many nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and nephews, as well as aunts, uncles, cousins and dear friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, Donald and Esther Bennett; and her parents-in-law, Don Smelker and Kaye Smelker-Barnes. Susan spent her life caring for others. A graduate of Henry Ford Hospital's School of Nursing, she spent many years serving as a Registered Nurse, first in the hospital setting and then for over twenty years in the specialty field of Allergy and Immunology. She worked in the offices of both Dr. Ghannam and Dr. Mohan in the Lansing-Okemos area; serving for many of those years as Head Nurse and Office Manager. She was well-loved by both staff and

patients. Upon retirement, Sue and Mike fulfilled their dream of relocating year round to their home at beautiful Bear Lake in Kalkaska, Michigan; a place that Sue loved dearly. In Kalkaska, she loved being involved in the the community to which she contributed in various ways, including the sometimes thankless task of election worker; and on a number of committees at St. Matthew Lutheran Church where she was an active member. Sue was also an avid crafter and quilter. She had a gift for creating beautiful and original designs which continue to be treasured by those fortunate enough to have been recipients of her grace and generosity over the years. Sue was a person of many talents but what she loved most was spending time with her children, their spouses and her grandchildren, whether up at the lake or in their own homes. Nothing excited her more than the seemingly small things like attending her grandchildren's artistic and sporting events; or simply having the opportunity to pick them up from school and sharing in an impromptu chat session. Sue was fond of recalling the warmth and love of her own grandmother referring to her often as "the grandma of grandmas" and saying that she wanted to be "just like her!" It was a hope that she certainly fulfilled. Her children and grandchildren were the joy of her life and she of their's. And yet, Sue's kindness, infinite patience and compassion were not limited to

immediate family.

Up at the lake, she and Mike loved nothing more than to open their home to relatives and friends from near and far. Sue delighted in the chaos of adults and children running up and down the steps to and from the lake, jumping into and out of boats, dragging fishing poles in and out of the house, sunning on the dock, and sitting around campfires at night. She loved it all! And then she also loved the quiet moments spent on the pontoon boat with whoever chose to escape with her for a brief interlude. She was always the first to notice a child (or even an adult) in need of a little individual attention and her heart would open just to them.

Sue will be deeply missed by all who loved her. She was a woman who lived life fully even up to the end. A person of deep faith, she never received an answer to the trial to which her illness subjected her; and yet, she never stopped trusting that her family, and her Lord, were walking with her always in, and through, the midst of it.

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

Tribute Wall

D&

“ Deb &. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan Joyce Smelker.

Deb &. - January 15 at 10:14 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Susan Joyce Smelker.



January 08 at 08:59 AM

MM

“ Manoj M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan Joyce Smelker.

Manoj M. - January 08 at 08:59 AM

MM

“ We had the honor of working with Sue for many years at Okemos Allergy Center. She was one of the hardest working people in the practice. Always caring with a smile, she kept our busy practice as efficient as possible. Her work ethics were unparalleled. She will be deeply missed, our condolences to her family.

Manoj Mohan - January 08 at 08:56 AM

J(

“ I have many fond memories of camping with the Smelker family at Harrisville SP. She always had a smile on her face. I know she will be missed by many. Love to the Smelker family. Jill (Appler) Peryam

Jill Peryam (Appler) - January 03 at 10:03 PM



“ I had the privilege of working with for more than 20 years at Okemos Allergy. Sue was the kind of person who made the workplace better simply by being there. She was incredibly energetic and efficient, deeply caring toward her patients, and unfailingly dependable. No matter what was asked of her, Sue never said no—she simply stepped up and got it done, always with a smile on her face.

Sue was a wonderful coworker and an even better human being. Her positive attitude, warm personality, and genuine kindness touched everyone she worked with. She brought calm to busy days, laughter to stressful moments, and compassion to every patient interaction. She was the kind of nurse—and the kind of person—you hope to have beside you every day.

My condolences to Michael and her family. I hope they find comfort in knowing how much Sue was respected, appreciated, and loved by her colleagues and the many lives she touched throughout her career.

Thaddeus Owen - January 03 at 01:57 PM