



Barbara Jo Palmer

November 28, 1954 - February 8, 2023

Barbara "Barb" Jo Palmer, age 68, of Moran, Michigan, passed away February 8th, 2023, at McLaren Northern Michigan in Petoskey, from complications related to lung cancer. She was born in Saginaw, Michigan, the only daughter of William and Ruth (Gehrcke) Dowis.

Barb graduated from Bridgeport High School in 1972. She was an exceptional athlete in both girls fast-pitch softball (as their star pitcher, she went undefeated for 4 years) and volleyball.

Barb moved to the Kalamazoo area in the late 70's where she worked several jobs including at Hardings Market in Oshtemo, Michigan, for several years. She finally landed a job at the Upjohn Co. in 1988 working her way up to QA inspector/trainer. She retired in 2012 after 24 years of service, leaving behind many best friends and fond memories.

She met her husband John at a work gathering (by asking HIM to dance) in 1982 and they were married in 1985 in East Jordan, Michigan. They eventually settled in the countryside of Schoolcraft where they raised their son, Nicholas. At this time, Barb's latent love for gardening and flowers blossomed big time, as did her interest in making pottery. As a potterist, she owes her unique designs and techniques to Leona Janke, their country neighbor (and world renown potter) - who mentored her for years.

Later on in life, Barb picked up golf, and fell in love with the game; within a few years she was shooting in the 30's and won many long drive contests. Barb was a go-getter; always busy making something for her son and his friends by hand (she knew power tools well), making Christmas ornaments for some sort of charity, or holding the family annual "Garden Party" in which she hid many trinkets for people to find around the garden and win prizes.

After spending 25 years in Schoolcraft, Barb and John decided to retire to their cabin on Brevort Lake in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and built a new home on the lake shore. Barb was the driving force in drawing the layout of the new house which turned out beautiful. Again, a new garden was planted, boxed off here and there (raised beds galore), and within three years with her odd-ball knick-knacks placed in strategic places in the garden, it became a showplace where strangers would stop by to adore it. Out in her newly built studio, she made her pottery and sold her art at shows or to anyone who would wander by. She was never far from either working outside in her garden or in her studio making new orders. Even while being treated for cancer, she had to just get one more piece of pottery finished.

She will be severely missed at Christmas (her favorite time of the year) where she hung her hand-made stockings, decorated the tree and house, baked all the goodies, and of course, bought all the presents (as her husband had an aversion to shopping). She will be missed by all her friends and neighbors. Barb had a knack for always seeing the positive in the most negative times and loved her grandkids beyond words.

Barb is survived by her husband, John, their son Nick (Erica) of Moran; brothers, Steve (Donna) Dowis of Georgia, Mike (Kathy) Dowis of New Jersey, Greg (Julie) Dowis of Michigan and sister-in-law, Angela Dowis of Tennessee.

Barb is preceded in death by her parents, and brother, Chris Dowis.

Per Barb's request, no funeral will be held and cremation will take place.

A celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, July 8, 2023 at 2:00PM at W2860 Luepnitz Lane Moran, MI 49760.

To honor Barb's memory, please give a friend or family member a big hug and tell them how much you love them.

The family wishes to thank all the hard working and compassionate nurses and staff at the Mackinac Straits ER and Oncology Dept, and the Petoskey McLaren Hospital.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: MSH Foundation, 1140 N. State St, St. Ignace, MI 49781, for No Cancer Patient Left Behind - Oncology Unit

Galer Funeral Homes & Cremation in Pickford, Michigan, is serving the family. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.galerfuneralhomes.com.

Cemetery Details

Eastern Upper Peninsula Crematory

24549 S M-129
Pickford, MI 49774

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 8. 2:00 PM (ET)

W2860 Luepnitz Lane
Moran, MI 49760

Tribute Wall



“ *Barbara Jo Palmer*

October 05, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ *Barbara Jo Palmer*

October 02, 2023 at 10:14 PM



“ *I feel so blessed to have gotten to know Barb through the love of her pottery and her sparkling personality. She truly was a master at her work and her heart went into each piece. A humble gal with a great laugh and sense of humor we hit it off. I will miss her so much, going to her shop and seeing her in Hessel. She was a true friend to all. Rest in Peace Barb. Love & hugs to her husband and family through this very difficult time.*

Michelle Kenny - March 22, 2023 at 12:40 PM

CH

“ My wife and I first met Barb at the Sunday's farm market in Hessel back when we first purchased our cottage in 2015. She was a very talented artist and loved everything she created. Our moments were whenever we would first see each other we would yell each other's name and run and hug each other. To everybody else in the room we appeared to be long lost friends, but we may have seen each other just a couple weeks prior. She was always the one I looked for at any show and will be missed forever. I will always still look for your smiling face and remember our conversations. We spoke of grandkids and our lives. Sorry Barb we never hooked up for a studio visit to share some wine and watch my pottery throwing skills. You will always be with me and the pieces you created for us will forever be with us. Some we purchased for gifts will now remain in our collection. I know you are looking down on us and we will always treasure your smiling face. If we miss you this much, I can only imagine how much your family does.

Curt and Kathy Hutchinson

curtis hutchinson - February 21, 2023 at 05:16 PM

LB

“ Barb was truly one of a kind. I have never met someone so full of life and energy. She was always on the go doing something. And she was great at everything she did! Her crafts were beautiful, her cooking was wonderful, she kicked my butt at golf and bowling, and her thumb was the greenest I've ever seen. She was brutally honest. I really missed seeing her after she moved to the UP. My sincere condolences to John and Nick. There's a new supernova somewhere in the universe tonight. 💔💔

Linda Bouwman - February 14, 2023 at 09:41 PM

JP

“ Barb was always having garden party’s for the girls at work which was something to look forward to every year. I still have Christmas ornaments I hang on my tree still today that she made for my kids. When John went hunting was a time barb would remodel or change something in the house while he was gone . Lol she was a special person that touched so many peoples hearts. You and your family are in my prays.

jean peterman - February 14, 2023 at 05:25 PM

DM

“ It's difficult to come up with just one good memory of Barb because all of them are good. The first recollection was meeting her in the front lobby of Upjohn for orientation as a new contract employee. She immediately walked up out of the group and introduced herself and shook my hand. I knew then she was a force of nature. She proved to be one of the most hardworking,honest,genuine, talented and caring people I have had the sincere pleasure to know. My condolences to John and Nick who were her world and the rest of her family. She will be missed.

Debra Mann - February 14, 2023 at 02:39 PM

RT

“ I worked with Barb on the Filling lines at the Upjohn Co. She was a hard worker and would always speak her mind. We had quite a few laughs along with some serious talks about Company issues that she felt strongly about. Rest in Peace, Barb.

Ron Thomas - February 14, 2023 at 08:14 AM

RL

“ Yes, we’ll all remember Barb’s wonderful laugh and her ability to see the best in everyone. Her gardens, creative pottery and love for her family are all tributes to her love of life. We’ll all miss her and keep her memories close. Our love to John and Nick and Erica.
Clarlyn and Rick Ledy

Rick and Clarlyn Ledy - February 13, 2023 at 06:33 PM

RB

“ Barb had the “best laugh” ever! She was so talented with anything she touched. She loved family, especially the Grandchildren Alan and Olli, adored her husband John, son Nick and his wife Erica. She is already missed in so many ways. So sorry her time was cut short.

Robin Palmer, sister-in-law to Barb - February 13, 2023 at 02:09 PM