



Cathy Marie Abramson

September 9, 1956 - March 19, 2024

Cathy Marie (McCoy) Abramson, age 67, of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, passed away on March 19, 2024, at her home with family by her side. She was born on September 9, 1956, in Sault Ste. Marie, to Kenneth and Helen Marie (Gurnoe) McCoy.

Cathy grew up in Sault Ste. Marie and graduated from Sault High School in 1974. Cathy was crowned Homecoming Queen and was the first Native American in Sault Ste. Marie to be crowned. She was a light everywhere she went, and everyone loved her spirit. She attended Lake Superior State University (LSSU) and graduated with an associate degree. She met Anthony Abramson at the pool while in college and fell head over heels. They married on December 23, 1978, at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Sault Ste Marie. They started their family and Cathy worked at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Sault Tribe Administration as their family grew. Cathy worked for the Sault Tribe Elder Program while returning to college to obtain her bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing. While attending LSSU she was an active participant in Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) and was honored with the Izaak Walton SIFE Award. She loved her tribal elders and assisted in the development of an elder language advisory team to promote revitalization of Anishinaabemowin. Cathy worked for the Youth Education & Activities (YEA) program with the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and was instrumental in the development of the first Tribal Youth Council and the Chi-

Nodin Running Club.

Following her service for YEA, she was elected to serve her tribal community as a Unit One Board of Director. This was her passion as she followed in the footsteps of her father and older sister, Bonnie McKerchie, in this role of serving her tribe. She dedicated 20 years (5 terms) of service in this role and retired in 2016.

Cathy was passionate about the health and wellbeing of our people. She was appointed to the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) in 2009 as a representative of the Bemidji Region and was elected as NIHB chairperson in 2013. She was diagnosed with Breast Cancer right after first being elected chair of NIHB. In 2015, Cathy received the highest-level award; the Jake White Crow Award, which recognizes an individual with outstanding lifetime achievements in elevating health care, advocacy, raising awareness, or effecting change for American Indian and Alaskan Native Healthcare. She also received the Indian Health Service Director's Special Recognition Award in tribal leadership and partnership in 2013. Additionally, Cathy served as an inaugural committee member of the Health and Human Services Secretary Tribal Advisory Council (HHS STAC). She became the first female chair of HHS STAC by unanimous vote. Cathy also served on the Center for Disease Control and Preventions Tribal Advisory Board, and on the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee. Even when her own health started challenging her, she did not let that stop her and she continued to support others and share her tremendous knowledge with those that would sit with her and listen. Cathy is credited with being the first one to say, "American Indians and Alaska Natives have the World's first prepaid health system, and we paid for it with our lives, our land, and our way of life."

Throughout all of her great accomplishments, the greatest was her love of her children, grandchildren, husband Tony, and her nieces and nephews. Cathy

enjoyed fishing, being with her children and grandchildren and showed her love of cooking to everyone. Cathy had a servant heart and would do anything for the people of Sault Ste. Marie and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribal Community.

Cathy is survived by her husband, Anthony Abramson; daughters; Lisa (Dan) Martin (Helen Kerfoot, Joy Kerfoot, Alyssa Martin, Kaiden Martin, Cruz Martin, and Ezra Martin); Laura (Justin) Fisher (Maddison Collins, Julia Collins, Eva Collins, Anna Collins, Skye Downwind, Dylan Fisher, and Gabriella Fisher); son, Anthony (Brianne) Abramson Jr (Anthony Abramson III and Nelly Abramson); siblings, Paul "Chip" McCoy, Daniel McCoy, Laurie Henry, Michael (Kim) McCoy, Sherri McCoy, Patrick (Betsy) McCoy, Russ (Linda) Mckerchie; many nieces, nephews, and cousins; and her kids at heart, Lisa Coonrod, Jenny Slough, Michael McKerchie, James McKerchie, Russell "Joey" McKerchie, D.J. Hoffman, Kenny McCoy.

Cathy was preceded in death by her parents, Kenneth and Helen McCoy; sisters, Carol McCoy, Bonnie McKerchie-Spring, and Janice Wojcik; sisters-in-law, Ruth McCoy and Barb McCoy.

Services will be held on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at the Niigaanagiizhik Ceremonial Building, 11 Ice Circle, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783. Visitation will begin at 5 PM, until Friday, March 22, 2024, when the Christian Ceremony will begin 10:00AM followed by the Funeral Service and Traditional Tribal Ceremony.

The final resting place will be Wilwalk Cemetery on Sugar Island, Michigan. Burial date to be determined later.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made in Cathy's name to Hospice of the EUP, 308 W. 12th Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

Family Life Funeral Homes assisted the family with arrangements.
Condolences may be left to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

Obituary as submitted by family.

Cemetery Details

Wilwalk Cemetery

Sugar Island
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 21. 9:00 AM - 11:59 PM (ET)

Niigaanaagiizhik Ceremonial Building
11 Ice Circle
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

Visitation

MAR 22. 12:00 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

Niigaanaagiizhik Ceremonial Building
11 Ice Circle
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

Traditional Ceremony & Christian Service

MAR 22. 10:00 AM (ET)

Niigaanaagiizhik Ceremonial Building
11 Ice Circle
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

Tribute Wall

JB

“ To Tony and family, she was a beautiful person. Sending up prayers for comfort and peace for you all.

Jamie (Fleming) Berge - May 10, 2024 at 04:13 PM

WR

“ William R. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Cathy Marie Abramson.



William R. - April 12, 2024 at 07:24 AM

BR

“ Bill And Janet Robinson lit a candle in memory of Cathy Marie Abramson



Bill and Janet Robinson - April 12, 2024 at 07:05 AM

RW

“ Robbyn Ware lit a candle in memory of Cathy Marie Abramson



Robbyn Ware - March 23, 2024 at 04:56 PM

AP

“ Anne Papineau lit a candle in memory of Cathy Marie Abramson



Anne Papineau - March 23, 2024 at 01:55 PM

FA

“ I am sad for the loss of a wonderful friend, but I am thankful for having had the joy of her friendship. Winnie The Pooh summed it up, “how lucky am I to have had something that makes saying goodbye so hard”

Rest in eternal peace, my friend.

Much love to the family and friends of this beautiful woman ❤️

Faith Allard - March 21, 2024 at 01:50 PM

TG

“ Tara Hetrick (nee Gardner) lit a candle in memory of Cathy Marie Abramson



Tara Hetrick (nee Gardner) - March 21, 2024 at 11:37 AM

LS

“ *Lisa Smith lit a candle in memory of Cathy Marie Abramson*



Lisa Smith - March 21, 2024 at 11:23 AM

FS

“ *Sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Cathy. She always had a smile on her face and a calm demeanor. Rest in eternal peace Cathy. Fly high with the angels.*

Fern Spencer - March 21, 2024 at 10:33 AM