



## Joan Tilson

February 7, 1927 - April 23, 2021

Joan Louise (Knetzger) Tilson, age 94, died on Friday, April 23, 2021 in Saline, Michigan where she moved in 2007 after living in Sault Ste. Marie for over 50 years. Joan was born on February 7, 1927 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Irene and Alois Knetzger. After her father died when she was 3, her mother, Irene, married Charles Strauch and they raised a family of 10 children on a farm near Germantown, Wisconsin.

Joan graduated from The University of Wisconsin (UWM) in 1948 where she studied education. Upon graduation, she accepted a teaching position with Rudyard Area Schools and arrived by train to begin her teaching career in Rudyard. On September 22, 1951 she married John "Jack" Tilson and moved to Sault Ste. Marie where Jack opened a barber business. Joan became a lifelong member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and was active in the Women's Guild. John and Joan were blessed with 4 children (Tim, Lynn, Karen and Margaret). Joan later returned to teaching and taught 7th-grade math to three generations of Chippewa County students in Sault Area schools for over 30 years. She retired from teaching in 1986 and volunteered with several organizations: St. Joseph's Catholic Church, St. Joseph's Guild Thrift Shop, Bayliss Public Library, and Chippewa County Hospice.

Joan was married to Jack "Red" Tilson for 53 years, who predeceased her in 2004. Joan is survived by her four children: Timothy, Fairfax VA; Lynn, Buckley, MI; Karen Miller, Saline MI; Margaret (Robert) Chaplin, Battle Creek, MI; two grandchildren: Kristen (John) Schils, Charlotte, NC and Jay (Kelsey)

Miller, Saline, MI and three great-grandchildren, Kenley Eve Miller, Maverick Paul Miller, Saline, MI and Emily Rose Schils, Charlotte NC. She was predeceased by four brothers and four sisters; one brother, Richard (MarBeth) Strauch, Boulder, CO survives.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday, June 11, 2021 at 11:30 A.M. at St. Andrew's Catholic Church, 510 Austin Road, Saline, MI. Friends may join the family for a time of visitation from 10:30 A.M. until the time of Mass at 11:30 A.M.

To view a live stream of the Mass remotely, please use this link: <https://youtu.be/icRbzFEFTXU>

Donations can be made to the John H. Tilson Memorial Scholarship Endowment fund by sending a check payable to the Rudyard Area Community Foundation, P.O. Box 394, Rudyard, MI 49780; please indicate TILSON in the memo portion of your check. The scholarship was established by Joan after Jack died in 2004 and is awarded to a Rudyard high school senior who will be attending college to become a teacher.

# Tribute Wall

NS

“ I grew up on the 1000 block of Superior Street and knew Tim and Margaret, and graduated from Sault High School in 1970. My drive to my son's house at 1400 Superior takes me past the Tilson house frequently.

*I remember Mrs. Tilson, she was a lovely lady.*

---

**Nancy Skidmore** - June 22, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ I worked with Joan at Sault Junior High School in the late 1970s. I have many fond memories of Joan, Karen Fifer, Jim Taylor and Bob Wienike on the first floor of the building standing hall duty between classes. They were all great people. Joan and Karen were the heart of the 7th grade math program and both were outstanding teachers. They were also never shy about offering sound much needed advice to us younger upstart teachers. I appreciated Joan's calm no nonsense words of wisdom. She was one of the best and the Junior High and world were better places because of her. May she Rest in Peace, she deserves that.

---

**Don McLean** - May 23, 2021 at 12:00 AM

BK

“ Joan was my aunt and the special "full blood" sibling of my dad in their big, blended family. I have fond memories of family visits: Joan was kind, smart, and funny--but took no guff. All perfect traits for a school teacher. I've attached a photo of Joan with her husband Jack together with her brother/my dad Bob Sr and my mom Evelyn. Smiles all around as they celebrate wedding anniversaries together. Thoughts and prayers for Karen, Tim, Lynn, and Margaret-- Peace.

---

**Bob Knetzger** - May 11, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MD

“ *Our thoughts and prayers for your family. Many good times were spent with your parents in the Soo and also at our cabins in DeTour.*

---

**Marvin & Carol Driedric** - May 06, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MO

“ *Mrs. Tilson was my 7th grade math teacher, and she was an excellent teacher. I learned alot from her and she always challenged me. I am now a math teacher at Sault High, and I still recall and use some of Mrs. Tilson's techniques. She was one of the best. May she rest in peace.*

---

**Mary (Seaman) O'Connor** - May 06, 2021 at 12:00 AM