



Mackenzie Paul

February 16, 2000 - January 22, 2026

Mackenzie Paul, affectionately known as Kenzie, age 25, of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, passed away on Thursday, January 22, 2026, after bravely battling cancer (acute myeloid leukemia) for nearly three years.

Born on February 16, 2000, Kenzie lived a life defined by determination, intelligence, athleticism, and deep kindness. Throughout her life — and especially during her illness — she demonstrated extraordinary resilience, courage, and grace.

A gifted athlete, Kenzie found joy and discipline in basketball, cross country, and soccer, earning twelve varsity letters during her high school years. She continued her basketball career at Lake Superior State University, playing collegiately in her hometown while exemplifying teamwork, perseverance, and leadership on and off the court.

Those same qualities shaped her academic path. Exceptionally smart and deeply driven, she had been entering her second year of medical school at Michigan State University's College of Human Medicine when she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. In October 2023, she publicly shared her diagnosis while inspiring thousands through her candid and hopeful social media presence.

During her battle with cancer, Kenzie refused to let the disease define her. She posted inspirationally using “Taking Back What Cancer Took From Me,” turning her experience into a source of encouragement and empowerment for others.

As part of her healing and advocacy, Kenzie expressed herself creatively in multiple ways. She wrote poetry, drew, and through her artwork began the Mantra Project, sharing her guiding statement, “I AM THE STORM.” This powerful statement reflected her courage, strength, and faith in God, inspiring others to face challenges with determination and hope. She also wrote a book of poetry titled *This Is What It Feels Like: A Book of Poems Written by a Cancer Patient*, creating space for those battling cancer to express emotions that are often hard to name, while helping family and friends better understand what their loved ones may be feeling.

Kenzie was fun loving and full of life — her smile and laughter were infectious, and her warmth and joy lit up every room she entered. She was truly a beautiful woman and a beautiful person, inside and out. Above all, simply being with Kenzie made those around her kinder, stronger, and better people.

Kenzie is survived by her loving husband, Brandon and their snuggle partner and sock bandit Naboo “Boo Butt”; her father and stepmother, Kevin Kalchik and Sheila Lewis; her mother, Renee Norkoli; her sisters, Taylor Jones (husband Tyler) and Hailey Lewis; her father and mother-in-law, Dean and Ann Paul; her aunt Kerri (Miller) and her cherished nephew Louie (Jones).

Family and friends are warmly invited to gather in celebration of Kenzie’s life on March 7, 2026, at Sault Wesleyan Church, beginning with visitation at 1:00 p.m., followed by a Celebration of Life Service at 2:00 p.m., where memories and love will be shared. A reception will follow the service at the Sault Elks Lodge, as we continue to honor and celebrate a life that touched so many.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family asks that donations be made to the “I AM THE STORM” Mackenzie (Kalchik) Paul Memorial Scholarship, established in her honor. This scholarship supports a graduating senior from Sault High School who exemplifies community involvement, athletics, academic achievement, and above all, kindness — the values Kenzie embodied. Contributions can be made through the Chippewa County Community Foundation: <https://www.chippewacountycommunityfoundation.org/>.

Though her life was far too short, Kenzie leaves behind a legacy of courage, intelligence, creativity, kindness, and the rare gift of inspiring everyone she met to be a better person.

Condolences may be given to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

Obituary as submitted by family.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Gathering

MAR 7. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Sault Wesleyan Church
3556 Seymour Rd.
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Celebration of Life

MAR 7. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Sault Wesleyan Church
3556 Seymour Rd.
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Tribute Wall



“ About my Sault sister Kenzie, she was a super down to earth person ,very social loved our family and friends, the Sault community and lake state , and I know when I was her neighbor she always lightened my day up ,she motivated me to become stronger every day I remember day before I was going to practice that she told me to keep fighting work hard and no matter what, were in this together bc we're a family! She was kind loving ,smart happy ,funny , she had the love for the game rest easy family we love you always forever Team #3!

Nick Wenzel - March 22 at 03:02 AM

AF

“ Addy forgrave & family purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Mackenzie Paul.



Addy forgrave & family - March 06 at 09:37 PM

AC

“ Autumn Cook-Woosley purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Mackenzie Paul.



Autumn Cook-Woosley - March 06 at 01:35 PM

PP

“ The world has lost an angel, but heaven has gained an angel. What a little spark plug this girl was. I remember one story, I went to visit Kevin an this little girl was playing on the basketball court and I always thought of myself on being a halfway decent athlete and I said “hey little girl you wanna play a little one on one” thinking I’ll just take a couple shots from the outside after losing three games and sweating so hard I told her I’m never gonna play with you again lol she completely smoked me and I think she was in 9th grade!!!! Kevin just sat there smiling I told him at least you could have done is warned me!!
Rest in peace you’ve earned it!!

Paul Perry - March 03 at 09:31 AM

NW

“ Kenzie was a sister to me , she was a person of faith she uplifted me when I was my worst days , she would always hug me at school events , she supported me through sports and schooling , she always had that hype energy to get us both through the day ! she always encouraged me to be a better person and she was smiling laughing with our community our friends our family and we were also down the road neighbors for a long time and Kenzie and I rode the same bus together to school we had 1 or 2 classes , we had the same lunch hour , and I remember when I was in the office for failing a test she came by and said you ok? and I said yeah I'm good and you could tell she had a look of worry concern on her face she was that worried that's how caring and kind she was she was a trooper and now she is now known as the "Storm!

nick wenzel - February 23 at 06:48 PM

KN

“ Renee and family I am so incredibly sorry for your family loss. She was such a beautiful girl and such an inspiration to so many people. I will continue to hold your family close to my heart.

Kristina Nichols - February 21 at 08:55 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mackenzie Paul.

February 19 at 04:23 PM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Mackenzie Paul.



February 19 at 04:23 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mackenzie Paul.



February 16 at 02:20 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mackenzie Paul.

February 16 at 02:20 PM

MH

“ *Melissa H. purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of Mackenzie Paul.*



Melissa H. - February 13 at 09:03 AM

MH

“ *Melissa H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mackenzie Paul.*

Melissa H. - February 13 at 09:03 AM

GB

“ *Forever grateful to have known you, Kenzie. Thank you for being an incredible friend. Until we meet again—sleep peacefully ☐*

Gina Brown-Steplitus - February 10 at 07:33 PM

JS

“ *I did not know Kenzie but through her posts I felt connected to her, and I prayed so much she would survive, god love her. My condolences from a small village in Yarmouth co. Nova Scotia. She so touched my heart.*

Judy Surette - February 10 at 05:29 PM

HC

I didn't know kenzie personally but through social media she touched my heart like nobody ever has, she felt like my best friend. Kenzie was an earth angel but way way to good for this earth. I followed kenzie right through her journey, if I could have half her courage I would feel content.kenzie you were amazing. I'm so sorry for Brandon and kenzie's family and friends at this very sad time. From Heather from New Zealand

Heather Corkill - February 11 at 01:56 AM

BF

I did not know Kensie, but I worked with her dad Kevin at the hospital. I've watched her through her journey, her videos. She's a talented young lady. She inspired me to keep going. RIP Kensie. ❤️

Barbara Farrar - February 11 at 08:52 AM

FE

My sincere condolences to Kenzie's husband Paul, her extended family, friends and peeps. I had managed to see one of her posts and was very impressed by her positive approach to how she was battling such a horrible disease with such grace. Having spent the best part of 3 years transporting close family members to their chemotherapy treatments my heart was heavy watching Kenzie's journey. She was a beautiful soul and after purchasing her book and one of her drawings I continued to follow her journey. May her soul rest in eternal peace as she is pain free and healthy again. Fly high with the angels Ms Kenzie!

Fern - February 11 at 09:09 AM

NS

“ Nichole Sasso-Allison lit a candle in memory of Mackenzie Paul



Nichole Sasso-Allison - February 10 at 02:49 PM