



Nancy Carole Fenlon

November 21, 1942 - November 5, 2025

Nancy Carole (Rothwell) Fenlon, age 82, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and sister passed away peacefully surrounded by family on November 5, 2025, in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. She was born on November 21, 1942, in Sault Ste Marie to William “Paul” and Sylvia Marie (Doran) Rothwell.

Nancy was born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and graduated from Sault Area High School before earning her bachelor’s degree in Home Economics from Michigan State University (MSU). In 1964, she began her career with JCPenney in Edison, New Jersey, where she became one of the first women hired into the company’s management training program, a pioneering achievement she was proud of throughout her life.

While attending Sault Tech, now known as Lake Superior State University, prior to transferring to Michigan State University, Nancy met the love of her life, Paul Fenlon. The two became engaged in 1967, while Paul was called to serve in the National Guard during the Detroit Riots. They often joked that Nancy was a “war bride,” as she and her mother planned the entire wedding amid that turbulent time. Nancy and Paul were married on November 25, 1967, beginning a fifty-seven-year partnership filled with love, laughter, and adventure.

In 1968, the couple opened their first fabric store, Fenlon’s Fabrics, in Grosse

Pointe Woods, Michigan. Over the next decade, their business expanded to include several stores across the metro Detroit area, including The Crafty Cricket. Together, they balanced entrepreneurship and family life while raising their three children in Grosse Pointe Woods.

In 1981, Nancy and Paul returned to their hometown of Sault Ste. Marie, where Paul joined Lake Superior State University and Nancy opened another store, The Country Cricket, on Portage Avenue. Later, Nancy joined Sault Area Public Schools as a paraprofessional, where she especially enjoyed working in the same schools her children attended, allowing her to share their activities and school breaks.

In the 1990s, Nancy began a new chapter as the Chippewa County Home Economist and 4-H Coordinator, a role that perfectly blended her love of education, community, and creativity. She took great pride in serving the families of Chippewa County and received the Early Career Service Award in 1998 for her dedication and impact. Nancy retired in 2003 after a fulfilling career spent improving the lives of others.

In retirement, Nancy and Paul embraced their love of travel—exploring Alaska, Italy, Ireland, and England—and spending winters with dear friends in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Some of her happiest times were summer boating trips with her Doran cousins and cherished gatherings with family and grandchildren at the historic Fenlon family home in Hessel, Michigan, cherished by generations.

Nancy will be remembered for her warmth, creativity, sense of humor, and unwavering devotion to her family. Her artistic spirit shone through her talents as a crafter, seamstress, and interior decorator. She earned a Master Gardener certification through Michigan State University's Extension and delighted in tending her gardens in Sault Ste. Marie and Hessel. Nancy was

always ready to drop everything for her children and grandchildren, traveling whenever needed to offer support or celebrate life's moments together.

She is survived by her loving husband, Paul; three children, Kelli Wiinamaki of Sault Ste. Marie, Jeffrey (Kristen) Fenlon of Tecumseh, Ontario, and Kristen (Matthew) Glaz of Oxford, Michigan; seven grandchildren, Keegan Hill, Kaden Hill, Murphy Fenlon, Adelyn Fenlon, Ellasyn Glaz, Abigail Glaz, and Elijah Glaz; and brother, William (Patricia) Rothwell of Katy, Texas. She is also survived by many extended family members and dear friends who will miss her deeply.

She was preceded in death by her parents, William (Paul) and Sylvia Doran Rothwell; and her son-in-law, Bruce Wiinamaki.

The family would like to thank the MyMichigan Medical Center Sault - Long Term Care unit for the excellent care and compassion that she and the family received during this challenging time.

A celebration of Nancy's life will be held in the Summer of 2026.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Special Olympics of Michigan, Area 35, 305 W. 19th Street Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783 in honor of her relationship with her grandson, Kaden, who she shared very special bond with, MyMichigan Medical Center Sault – Long Term Care Unit, P.O. Box 1858, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783, in appreciation of the wonderful care team there, www.mymichigan.org/SaultLTC, or the Chippewa County Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1979, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783 to continue her love and support for her community.

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

Obituary as submitted by family.

Tribute Wall

JG

“ Dear Paul,
So sorry for you loss. I knew Nancy while at State - she was always so fun to be with and a great sense of humor. Whenever I was around her she was smiling and had a kind of "impish" look about her. Take care of yourself, Paul.

Jim McGann
mcgann1266@gmail.com

James Mc Gann - November 12, 2025 at 05:31 PM

TF

“ The White Family. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Nancy Carole Fenlon.

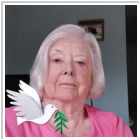
The White Family. - November 08, 2025 at 08:27 AM

TF

“ The White Family. purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Nancy Carole Fenlon.



The White Family. - November 08, 2025 at 08:27 AM



“ Paul, so sorry for your loss of Nancy! I have so many high school memories! Keep your family close to your heart! Beverly

Beverly Cuthbert - November 07, 2025 at 01:19 AM

TM

“ *Our sincere condolences to Paul and family. Terry and Bonnie Materna*

Terry Materna - November 06, 2025 at 10:16 PM

RE

“ *I knew Nancy as a former Extension Colleague in the Upper Peninsula and her Regional Extension Supervisor for U.P. Extension. I respected her dedication to the people she served.*

While recently I Sault Ste. Marie, I tried to make contact with Nancy unsuccessfully. My loss. I enjoyed my visit in the past when I was in the Soo visiting my son and family.

Prayers are being uplifted for her family at this time. May they know she is in a better place today and we will see her again when we are called home.

Raymond J Clark, Ph.D., CED Emeritus - November 06, 2025 at 07:22 PM

TM

“ *Paul, so sorry to hear of Nancy's passing. its been a while since our last get together at Hilton Head. Nothing but good memories to carry with us.*

tom matheson - November 06, 2025 at 05:05 PM

RW

“ *So sad to hear of your loss. Paul, Jeff, Kelli and Kristen please accept our sincere condolences for the passing of your mom. Although we only met at family celebrations, she was a very special lady.*

Rob @ Judy White - November 06, 2025 at 03:38 PM