

Remembering M. Karen Jones

Martha “Karen” (Gilliam) Jones, 76, passed away on March 17, 2020 at the Maple Wood Alzheimer’s Special Care Center in Springfield, Missouri. She was born on May 31, 1943, at Christa Hogan Hospital in West Plains, Missouri to Ted and Jeanette (Boss) Gilliam.

Karen grew up on the family dairy farm in Peace Valley, Missouri with siblings John, Rita, Mick and Dennis. She attended St. Joseph grade school in White Church, Missouri through 8th grade and graduated from West Plains High School in 1960. After high school, Karen went to work for the City of Springfield, but her tenure there was short-lived when they realized that she was not yet 18 years old, having graduated high school when she was only 16. Shortly afterwards, Karen began working in Winona, Missouri, for the United States Forest Service as a Secretary and Dispatcher, where she worked for 8 years.

While in Winona, Karen met the love of her life Roy Nelson Jones and married him on Christmas Day, 1964 at St. Joseph Church in White Church. At the time of her death, Karen and Roy had been happily married for over 55 years. Karen and Roy were blessed with two daughters: Jacquelyn Ann born on May 13, 1968 and Janet Alane, born on May 12, 1969.

In 1965 while living in Winona, Karen and Roy started a registered Angus herd “Jones & Gilliam Angus” with Karen’s parents. In 2015, Jones & Gilliam Angus celebrated 50 years of operation by being honored with the Historic Angus Herd Award from the American Angus Association, the Pioneer Award from the Missouri Angus Association, the inaugural Pinnacle Award from the Heart of the Ozarks Angus Association and a Resolution from Senator Mike Cunningham on behalf of the 98th General Assembly of the Missouri Senate recognizing and congratulating Karen and Roy on this momentous accomplishment. At the time of her death, Karen and Roy have gifted over 30 heifers to young Angus breeders. During her life, Karen was an active member of the Missouri and Heart of the Ozarks Angus Associations, holding many offices in both, including serving as the first woman president of the Missouri Angus Association in 2004-2005. She was also very proud to be elected 9 times as a Missouri delegate to the American Angus Association Annual Meeting. Karen always appreciated and loved her Angus friends.

From 1970 to 1976, Karen worked alongside Roy in the Bank of Bunker in Bunker, Missouri and the Dent County Bank in Salem, Missouri, as Operations Officer. After moving to Gainesville, Missouri in 1976, Karen retired from the banking business, instead spending her time spoiling Roy and Jackie, becoming the primary caregiver of their cattle and the AI technician for their herd. She was also a substitute school bus driver and rural route mail carrier. Karen served as an election judge for many years and she, along with Roy, was honored for 25 years of service to the Ozark County Republican Committee. She excelled at crocheting beautiful afghans, sewing, cooking and baking – especially pies - although she really preferred spending time outside taking care of her yard, garden and the cattle. Karen was an active member of Saint William’s Catholic Church in Gainesville, Missouri throughout much of her life.

Karen was preceded in death by her parents Ted and Jeanette Gilliam, daughter Janet (who only lived 4 days after birth), brothers

John and Dennis Gilliam, John’s wife Lu and nephew Kyle Gilliam.

Karen is survived by husband Roy of Springfield, Missouri; daughter Jackie of Saint Louis, Missouri; sister Rita Fugate of Overland Park, Kansas; brother Mick (Donna) Gilliam of Peace Valley, Missouri; sister-in-law Karen Gilliam of West Plains, Missouri; Karen and Roy’s “kids and grandkids” Mark and Tina Henry and their children Julia, Roebe and Mae Marie of Ava, Missouri; and many other family and friends – all of whom will remember Karen for her great hugs, sparkling eyes and ever-present smile.

Roy and Jackie would like to thank the amazing staff of Maple Wood for their care of Karen during the last 3½ years of her life and for the love and support they have shown not only to Karen, but also Roy and Jackie, during that time. Roy and Jackie are also very thankful to the staff of Seasons Hospice for making Karen as comfortable as possible during her final days.

Karen’s care and arrangements have been entrusted to Robertson-Drago Funeral Home of West Plains, Missouri. Due to the current

health risks associated with large gatherings, the family will not hold a public visitation or funeral Mass at this time but will host family and friends in a celebration of life honoring Karen on or near her birthday in late May. A private family burial service will be held at the Howell Memorial Park Cemetery in Pomona, Missouri later this week.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations be made to the Missouri Junior Angus Association Scholarship Endowment Fund or the Heart of the Ozarks Angus Breeders’ Association Scholarship Endowment Fund (both scholarship funds held and managed by the American Angus Foundation). These donations may be made online (<https://www.angus.org/Foundation/GetInvolved/DonateOnline.aspx>) or mailed to the American Angus Foundation (3201 Frederick Avenue, Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997). 🐾



**M. Karen Jones
1943 - 2020**

