

Mary Karen (Jackson) Ruddy, daughter of Jack and Kathryn (Duffy) Jackson, was born March 12, 1938, in LuVerne, Iowa. She lived in Graettinger with her family until age five, when the family moved to Emmetsburg. She attended St. Mary's Grade School and graduated from Emmetsburg Catholic School in 1957. She attended Doane College in Crete, Nebraska, receiving her Undergraduate degree in art and education in 1973. Continuing her education, she received an MLS and Ph.D. in Library and Information Science from Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas in 1990. She served as Director in the Administration of College and University Libraries until 2004 when she and her husband, Victor Ruddy, retired back home to Emmetsburg. Only then, could she devote herself to her first love, the creation of Art in all its forms.

She has many pieces of Art in private collections in Iowa, Minnesota, Texas, and Nebraska and was instrumental in completing the restoration of the Stations of the Cross, Nativity and other statues at Holy Family Catholic Church. Karen created a very large mosaic of the Holy Family- located in the Holy Family Parish Center, Emmetsburg. She has worked on restoration of mosaic pieces at the West Bend Grotto and statue restorations at Trinity Heights in Sioux City, IA. Karen loved to participate in art exhibits throughout Northwest Iowa as a member of Arts on Grand in Spencer. Her art will continue to be enjoyed by many in the years to come.

Karen will always be remembered for her beautiful smile, warm heart and "Love that Red" by Revlon lipstick. She loved her cruises in the car with Vic, a good cheeseburger from the A&W along with a root beer float, and a little chocolate snickers bar to finish the evening. Turquoise jewelry, pottery, mosaics, beaded jewelry, and shawls of beautiful colors and cozy textures – will forever remind us of Karen.

Karen and her husband, Victor, spent the last fifteen years enjoying six months in Emmetsburg and six months in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas – enjoying the best of both worlds. They were loved by many.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Victor, May 15, 2026; parents, Jack and Katie Jackson; sisters, Sharon Calkins and Kathleen Jackson; and brother, Michael Jackson. She is survived by her stepsons, Joe (Susan) Ruddy of Arlington, TX and Micheal Ruddy of West Palm Beach, FL; sister, Jackie (Gary) Rene of Alamo, TX; brother, Tim (Bev) Jackson of Emmetsburg; plus, all of her wonderful nephews and nieces.

Any memorials received will be given to the Emmetsburg Catholic School's art program in honor of Karen.

The family would like to thank you for your many acts of kindness and expressions of sympathy and invite you to a time of fellowship and luncheon following the service at the cemetery.

In Loving Memory of Mary Karen Ruddy

March 12, 1938

LuVerne, Iowa

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July 29, 2026

Emmetsburg, Iowa

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

10:30 AM Thursday, August 6, 2026

Holy Family Catholic Church

Emmetsburg, Iowa

Celebrants - Fr. Travis Crotty & Deacon John Rudd

MUSIC

Sue Rouse - Organist

Holy Family Catholic Choir

"Be Not Afraid" - "Precious Lord Take My Hand"

"I Am The Bread Of Life" - "I Have Loved You"

"O' Loving God" - "Irish Blessing"

LECTOR

Mary Helen Kenne

GIFT BEARERS

Julie Dunlap - Megan Rene

CASKET BEARERS

Mike Dunlap - Ben Dunlap - Brian Jackson

Jake Jackson - Luke Jackson - Megan Rene

INTERMENT

St. John's Cemetery

Emmetsburg, Iowa

In Loving Memory

Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,

May the wind be always at your back,

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

And the rains fall soft upon your fields.

And until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand



Mary Karen Ruddy

March 12, 1938

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July 29, 2026

Arrangements by Martin-Mattice Funeral Home
martinmatticefuneralhome.com