

WAKE SERVICE

Friday, December 22, 2023 5:00 pm
Margaret Henderson Parish Hall, Opaskwayak, MB

FUNERAL SERVICE

Saturday, December 23, 2023 1:00 pm
Church of Redeemer, Opaskwayak, MB
Presider: Rev. Flora Young
Music Ministry: Russell Cook Memorial Singers

INTERMENT

Emmanuel Cemetery, Opaskwayak, MB
Reception at Margaret Henderson Parish Hall, OCN

ACTIVE PALLBEARERS

Sage Beacham, Tyler Halliday, Tyler Ross, Colton Cook,
Diego Cook, Kyle Ross, Kyle Chubb, Mark White.

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Wally Olson, Shelly Sinclair, Luana Traverse,
Randy Sewap, Michelle Banhegy, George Muswagon,
Marlene Delaronde, Murial Lathlin, Gabby Beardy,
Terilyn Taylor, Dakota McGillivray, Brian Halcrow,
Charity Constant, Blacksmith Sundance Family,
Moose Lake Sundance Family,
Shallow Bay Sundance Family (Grand Rapids),
Norway House Sundance Family,
Sakitowin Sundance Family (Pimicikamak),
Opaskwayak Sundance Family,
Beardy, Merasty, Cook, Dumas, Queskekapow, Bear,
White, Dieter, Chubb, McKay Families,
Families in Pukatawagan, Manitoba,
Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, Prince Albert,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

All her friends and family too numerous to mention.
If we left anyone out it was not intentional.



Hemauer Funeral Home, The Pas, Manitoba

www.hemauerfuneralhome.com

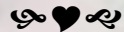
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In Loving Memory

In Loving Memory of
Athena Renee
Stepanow
Munito Asini Iskwew

December 22, 1996
December 17, 2023



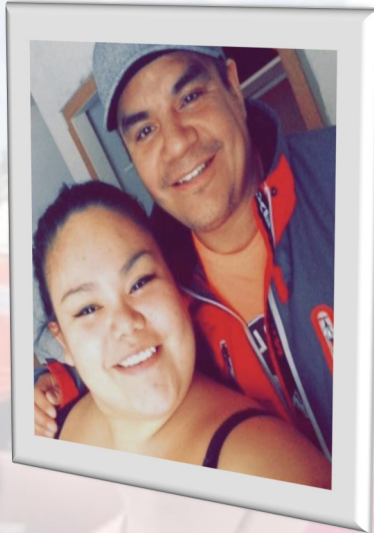
It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of my beloved daughter Athena Stepanow on Sunday, December 17, 2023, at Health Sciences Centre, in Winnipeg, MB. Where she was surrounded by family and friends. She was 26 years of age. Athena was born at St. Boniface Hospital, Winnipeg, Manitoba to Veronica Cook and James Stepanow on Sunday, December 22, 1996.

From the day she was born Athena was a beautiful bundle of joy, everyone who held her knew that she was going to be a beacon of hope, love, and compassion not only for her family, but for her friends, and community. She did that, everyday, even to her last day. Athena effortlessly brought everyone together, whether it be dancing, singing, laughing, or cooking.

Athena grew up in ceremony and loved this way of life as she was proud of her culture and traditions. Her mom made sure that she had known the ways of our people by attending sweats even while she carried her in her womb. Her spirit name was, Manito Asini Iskwew, which means Creator's Rock Woman, and it refers to the rocks that go into ceremonial rattles. Her aura shone bright and shared that light with all who were in her presence. Athena's favorite things to do were to attend traditional ceremonies, where she always looked forward to meeting up with her Sundance friends and family whom she grew to love and admire. She loved Sundance so much that when she completed her four years at Blacksmith Sundance, she decided to pledge another four years in Pimicikamak but could not complete it due to her illness.

Athena was a kind, thoughtful and compassionate person. She loved her family, friends, and cats (Medusa & Carlito) with her whole heart. She was kind, generous with her time and extremely thoughtful in everything she did. She had the ability to make anyone feel comfortable, so they could just be themselves. She taught her friends and family to be loving and compassionate. Athena was artistic in nature and had an eye for photography, she loved to take pictures of her friends, where she would take selfies of herself. She could draw, paint, write poetry, short stories. One story was about her late granny Emma, which she won an essay writing contest. She was so proud of her accomplishment to showcase her love of her Kookum, who was her inspiration and the reason as to why she danced.

Athena was always asked by family, "Did you graduate?" She made it her personal goal to graduate, so that they wouldn't have to ask anymore. She



obtained her grade 12 in June 2022. Her dad would have been so proud of her as he always pushed her to complete her grade 12.

She enjoyed dressing up and applying makeup. She also like travelling and she scratched off one destination on her list of places to visit. She went to Jamaica with friends and family in tow. She really enjoyed herself and was planning to go back to visit in August of 2024.

She loved to eat out at various restaurants, her favorite being Red Lobster. When we went to the states, we made sure to stop at all the restaurants that she viewed on TikTok. She would say, "Mom let's go try out this place, I heard it was good." She loved camping, swimming, and playing beach volleyball. Clearwater lake was her favorite spot to go to, it was her happy place.

Athena was employed by the Kikiwak Inn as a bus girl, and IGA cleaning, she also worked at Joe. A. Ross as a HSW worker, and at Oscar Lathlin Collegiate as security. She also babysat for her cousin Amber and her friends Catherine and Terrel, while they taught classes in O'Chiese. She helped raise Amber's child, Rhielle. That was her baby girl because she had no children of her own. The three girls all called her auntie, which brought a smile to her face. She was full of life and energy and so beautiful inside and out. She had healing hands and made everyone feel good when she hugged them.

Entertaining people was her forte, she loved to dance, sing, and plan parties. She always pulled out her karaoke machine and would make everyone take turns to sing, even if we did not know how to sing.

Her heart was full, and it overflowed onto all who knew her. To miss someone so much means they were extremely special. We were blessed to have her in our lives. She was in our hearts forever and will always be missed. We know she's happy now and in pain no more. It hurts to be a part of, but we will see her again. We are comforted to know she is in a better place, sharing her gifts and smiling down on all of us. I hope and pray that we can continue her passion for family, friends, tradition, and creativity.

Athena leaves to mourn her passing, her **mom** Veronica; **sisters and brother** Kaylee Shaye Stepanow, Ronald (Clyde) Cook, Kenzie Stepanow, Lindsey Bear, Joanne Pelletier and Kevin Clarke; **grandparents** Barney and Victoria Stepanow and Isaac Cook; **Godmother** Patricia Merasty; **Godfather** Frank Beady.

Athena was predeceased by her **father** James Stepanow; **grandmother** Emma Cook; **great-grandfather** Louie John Morin (Josette); **great grandparents** Fred and Virginia Cook, Emil and Elsie Merasty; **grandfather** Jimmy Custer; **mooshoom** Clifford Merasty; **kukoom** Sarah Cook and Myra McKenzie; **favourite cousin** Teia April Faith Merasty; **special friend** Myke Balfour; **favourite aunt** Jenn Dawson and other relatives too numerous to mention. If we forgot anyone it was not intentional.

