



*In Loving Memory  
Marcella O. Gustafson*

*February 1, 1955 - April 18, 2025*



*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*

*- John 14: 1-3*

Marcella was born on February 1, 1955, to Roy and Laura Johnson and was raised in North Dakota alongside her siblings: Randy, Kenneth, Loren, and her beloved sister, Janice (Johnson) Ellefson. She was preceded in death by her parents and all three of her brothers. Her best friend and sister, Janice, remains to honor her memory.

From a young age, Marcella had a heart for helping others. During her high school years, she served as a candy striper at the Cavalier Hospital; setting the stage for a lifetime of caregiving and compassion. After graduating high school, she would later go on to become a nurse, dedicating her life to service both at home and in her career.

On January 18, 1974, Marcella married the love of her life, Dennis Gustafson, in Belton, Texas. Together, they built a life rooted in loyalty, sacrifice, and devotion as she stepped fully into the role of a proud and resilient Army Wife. Through Dennis's many tours of duty, Marcella held her family together, raising their three children, Penny, Denny, and Brian with unwavering strength and grace.

While managing her home and raising her children, Marcella also pursued her education, graduating with an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing from Hartnell College in Salinas, California. She balanced overnight nursing shifts at Silas B. Hayes Hospital while remaining a full-time presence for her children during the day. Letters and postcards were the heartbeat of her enduring connection with Dennis across distances.

Marcella's dedication extended beyond her own family. She was a pillar of support for other military spouses, establishing and leading a family support group that offered comfort, connection, and hope. On April 18, 1989, exactly 36 years to the day before her passing; she was awarded a Certificate of Commendation in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the military community.

In November 1990, Marcella and her children moved to West Fargo, ND, while Dennis finished out his tour of service in Fort Ord, CA. Marcella continued her nursing career, working as an ICU/CCU nurse at Meritcare (now Sanford Health) for 31 years, earning the respect and admiration of colleagues and patients alike. She retired after three decades of lifesaving and life-giving work.

Marcella is survived by her husband, Dennis; her children, Penny (Duane), Denny (Shanda), and Brian (Katie); grandchildren, Chemiati, Tatiana, Hunter, Rylie, James, and Jonah; and great-grandchildren, Landon, Paysen, Alauna, with a fourth great-grandchild due in July 2025.

Marcella was known for her infectious sense of humor; a joyful spark that lives on in her children. She loved joking around and could bring laughter to any room, no matter the occasion. Her ability to lift spirits and find light in the darkest moments made her an irreplaceable presence in so many lives.

Known affectionately as "Marcy," she had an open-door policy and an open heart. She gave of herself endlessly, loving without condition and supporting without hesitation. She was the best cook, ensuring that no one ever left her home hungry. Her warmth filled every room, and her laughter echoed through both joyful and difficult times.

Marcy found joy in simple pleasures: reading, woodworking, scary and sci-fi movies, westerns, and spending time with her family. Her favorite attire was jeans and a sweatshirt, and her favorite role was simply being there for those she loved.

Marcy leaves behind a powerful legacy of love, laughter, service, strength, and generosity. She will be deeply missed, lovingly remembered, and forever cherished.

Marcella Olive Gustafson, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend, passed away unexpectedly on April 18, 2025, at Altru Hospital, surrounded by her immediate family and the compassionate care of the ICU staff.

## ***VISITATION***

*Friday, April 25, 2025 - 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.*

*Askew Funeral Home  
Cavalier, North Dakota*

## ***GRAVESIDE SERVICE***

*Saturday, April 26, 2025 - 1:00 p.m.*

*Andvari Cemetery  
Cavalier, North Dakota*

## ***CLERGY***

*Rev. Jessica Merchant*



*Marcy began saving pennies in 1985 to fulfill her cherished vision of visiting the Grand Canyon—a dream she shared with her sister, Janice. In 2024, that dream came true as she stood amidst its breathtaking beauty, joined by Dennis, her devoted husband, and Janice. Marcy's legacy inspires us to cherish our dreams and embrace the loved ones who make life meaningful, just as she did.*