

Susan was born on September 25, 1941, in Chester to Vira and Betty (Nelson) Peterson. The middle child between her older brother, Perry, and younger brother, Tim, she grew up on farms in the Chester area and graduated from Chester High School in 1959. During her high school years, Susan kept busy participating in FHA, annual staff, Girls State, class plays, Glee Club, Chorus, and Band, where she played the tuba. In her senior year, she also served as secretary to the principal. On August 16, 1959, Susan married Joseph Aldrich in Chester, beginning a life together rooted in family, friendship, and the community they loved. Joe passed in July of 2024. They would have been married 65 years in August of 2024.

Susan and Joe made their home in Chester, where they raised their two children, Lisa and Kris, and lived above Dakota State Bank. Susan worked as a bank teller alongside Joe, building relationships with generations of customers. When Dakota State Bank became Home Federal in 1999, she continued working for the bank in Chester and later in Colman until her retirement in 2006.

For Susan, working at the bank was about much more than numbers and transactions. It was about people. Having spent her entire life in the Chester community, she knew many of her customers personally and genuinely enjoyed visiting with them. She had a way of making people feel comfortable and welcome, whether they were longtime friends or someone she had just met. Her warm personality and beautiful smile were familiar and reassuring to so many, and she carried that same kindness wherever she went.

Susan believed in being involved and giving back to the community. She was an active member of the Chester United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women, and the Mary Singers. She served as an EMT with the Chester Fire Department, participated in the Chester Area School Booster Club, and was involved in countless other community activities. Whether through her church, her work, or her volunteer service, Susan found ways to care for others and make a difference.

At home, Susan found happiness in the simple pleasures of life. She loved gardening, reading, cooking, baking, canning, a good card game, and music, which remained a lifelong love. After moving from the apartment above the bank into a home of her own, she took great pride in creating a yard filled with flowers and a thriving garden. Susan didn't just have a green thumb—she had ten green fingers. Somehow, she could make just about anything grow and flourish, and her flower-filled yard became another reflection of the care and love she put into everything she did.

If there was one thing Susan knew how to do especially well, it was feed people. Food was her love language, and no one ever left Susan's home hungry. A meal at her house was always something to look forward to, and if her grandchildren asked Grandma to make something special, she rarely said no. She loved sharing whatever she was creating in the kitchen with family and neighbors, believing that good food was even better when shared with others. Her chocolate chip cookies, molasses cookies, and famous cinnamon rolls were more than favorite treats; they were expressions of her love. In Susan's kitchen, there was always room for one more person, one more plate, and one more helping.

But as much as Susan loved gardening, cooking, music, and being part of her community, nothing meant more to her than her family.

Susan and Joe were devoted parents and grandparents who believed in showing up for the people they loved. Together, they put countless miles on the car and spent countless hours in bleachers and lawn chairs, cheering on their children and grandchildren through all their activities. They understood that being present mattered, and they gave their time and support generously. Whether it meant traveling to a game, attending a band or music concert, or simply spending time together, they wanted their family to know they were loved and supported. Those hours spent watching, cheering, visiting, and making memories were among the greatest joys of Susan's life.

Susan also had a special gift for making family gatherings and holidays feel like home. She welcomed people with open arms, whether they were relatives, friends, neighbors, or someone who simply happened to stop by. Her home was a place to gather around the table, enjoy a good meal, share stories, laugh together, and make memories. She made holidays special not because everything had to be perfect, but because she knew that the people gathered together were what mattered most.

Her love extended to animals, too. Over the years, Susan and Joe adopted and rescued several dogs and a cat, giving them the same care and affection they gave the people in their lives. Susan had a particular soft spot for dachshunds, and the family granddogs knew that Grandma's house was a special place where love, attention, and treats were always plentiful.

Susan's life was a beautiful example of the many ways love can be shown: through a warm smile at the bank, a plate of freshly baked cookies delivered to a neighbor, flowers carefully tended in the garden, a home filled with family, or hours spent cheering from the sidelines. She didn't need grand gestures to show people they mattered. She did it through the everyday things she did, the time she gave, the food she shared, and the welcome she offered to everyone who visited her home.

Her family and friends will miss her more than words can say, but the love she planted in their lives will continue to grow for generations to come.

Susan is survived by her children, Lisa (Mark) Acheson of Chester and Kristian (Angela) Aldrich of North Sioux City; grandchildren, Paul (Chelsea) Acheson, Amy Acheson, Cole Acheson, Kelsey Aldrich, Morgan (Cody) Potts, Carter Aldrich, and Jaycee Aldrich; great-grandchild, Camden Acheson; brother, Tim Peterson of Montana; sister-in-law, Karen Peterson of White Lake, South Dakota; brother-in-law, Duane (Carol) Aldrich of Hawarden, Iowa; and many other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, Vira and Betty Peterson, husband Joe, and her brother, Perry Peterson.

What You Left With Us

You are still here
in the way we set the table,
in the songs we know by heart,
in the small things we learned from you.

Your voice returns
in ordinary moments-
a familiar phrase,
a recipe folded at the edge,
the light across a quiet room.

We carry more of you
than we ever knew we were learning.
Your kindness became part of us,
your love shaped the way we love.

And though we miss you deeply,
what you gave us keeps moving forward.

In Memory Of

Susan Kaye Aldrich

September 25, 1941 ✞ October 6, 2026

Memorial Service
2:30 PM
Thursday, October 15, 2026
Chester United Methodist Church
Chester, South Dakota
Rev. Susan Jennys, PhD, Officiating
Helen Mogen, Pianist

Congregational Hymns
"Amazing Grace"

Soloist
Adam Anderson
"Wind Beneath My Wings"
"Supermarket Flowers"

Special Music
"I'll Be Seeing You"

Honorary Pallbearers

Paul Acheson
Cole Acheson
Morgan Potts
Jaycee Aldrich
Amy Acheson
Kelsey Aldrich
Carter Aldrich
Camden Acheson

Interment
Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Chester, South Dakota

MINNEHAHA FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION SERVICES
BALTIC COLTON DELL RAPIDS GARRETSON



A Celebration of Life

Susan Kaye Aldrich

September 25, 1941 – October 6, 2026