

# *Celebrating the Life of*

Dena Eichelberger was born in Waterloo, Iowa, on September 13, 1949, to Manford and Theo Osborn. She grew up in Waterloo, Spencer, and Cresco, Iowa, graduating from Crestwood High School in 1967. She worked as a nurse's aid in high school and throughout college. She attended Minnesota State College in Mankato where she and Dean met on a blind date. They fell in love and were married on November 28, 1970.

Dena, the president of her class, graduated from Northwestern School of Nursing at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in 1972. She worked as a registered nurse from 1972-2011 and loved her career. Dena's time as an obstetrics nurse in New Ulm and working with young families through prenatal, post-partum visits at Public Health were the highlight of her career. She also taught Early Childhood Education and Prenatal classes for over 25 years. One of the accomplishments she is most proud of is graduating from Bethel in 1996 with her BS in nursing.

They lived in Mankato, St. James, and New Ulm, MN before moving to Willmar in 1989 where Dena was the Director of Nursing at Rice Care Center. She also worked at Woodland Centers and spent 15 years at Kandiyohi County Public Health on the maternal child health team.

Family was very important to Dena. She married the love of her life, Dean, and they were blessed with two daughters Tanya and Christine. Dena and Dean had a wonderful life of love and happiness. Watching their five grandchildren growing up has also brought them much joy.

Dena's passion for nursing and caring for others was evident in the areas where she volunteered. She served as a volunteer Parish Nurse at Calvary Lutheran Church in Willmar for 15 years. She also served on the Church Board several times and taught Sunday school when her children were young.

Her interests included playing bridge and carbles. She loved swimming and walking, was active in doll collecting and served many offices in the Sun Bonnet Doll Club. She enjoyed reading, gardening, arts, crafts, sewing, and being with family. Her and Dean attended black powder rendezvous several weekends each summer.

In May of 2019, Dena was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and bravely underwent chemotherapy, thankful for the time she was in remission. In July of 2022, Dena's abdominal pain returned. Over the next three months it was determined the cancer had metastasized to a level where she decided it was time to enter hospice to carry out the remainder of her life. During those last few weeks, she recounted the wonderful life she enjoyed while teaching those around, and at her bedside, the meaning of faith and the priorities of life.

Dena took a special sense of pride in her position on the Bethesda Board, serving from 2016 to 2022. During that time, she was part of the team that developed their hospice program, scheduled to open in the fall of 2022. Dena's family is appreciative of the excellent care she received at Bethesda and the support hospice provided to the entire family.

Dena was preceded in death by her only sibling, Robert "Bob" in 1988, her father Manford "Ozzie" in 1990, her mother Theo in 2001, as well as many aunts and uncles.

Dena is survived by her loving husband of fifty-two years, Dean Eichelberger, of Willmar; children: Tanya (Tim) Miller of Sioux Falls, SD and Christine Piper of North Branch, MN; grandchildren: Paige, Evan and John Miller, and Ava and Oliver Piper; many nephews and nieces, other relatives, and friends.

It was Dena's hope that she made your day better if your paths crossed. In reflecting on her life, she said, "I laughed every day and had fun," and "I dedicated my life to trying to make the world a better place." Her compassion for people, love of her family, and passion for her career made her who she was. She will be greatly missed by those that were part of her life.



## *Dena Eichelberger*

*1949 - 2022*



*There was a sign  
on heaven's door  
HELP WANTED:  
angels needed 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Mothers and babies  
need a hand  
Dena knew where  
she would land*

*-Dean Eichelberger*

*Always remember I love you all. I hope I made some impression on you because without sharing and caring, life is empty. My life was full because of all of you and the difference you made in my life. Thank you all! I especially want to thank my wonderful husband Dean, my daughters, Tanya and Christine, and my son in law, Tim for all the joy you have given me. My grandchildren Paige, Ava, Evan, Oliver, and John you rock my world! What a wonderful life I have lived and because of you all and the rewarding career I had as a nurse. Celebrate and know I am with my Heavenly Father! Make every day count, and find something to laugh at every day. I will always be smiling down from heaven on all of you because you are all amazing, wonderful people!*

*I was so blessed to have you in my life!!!*

*Love, Dena*

In Loving Memory Of

# *Dena Eichelberger*

September 13, 1949  
Waterloo, Iowa

November 6, 2022  
Willmar, Minnesota

## **Celebration of Life Service**

Saturday, November 12, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.  
Calvary Lutheran Church  
Willmar, Minnesota

Prelude		Naomi Baker
Processional		
Thanksgiving for Baptism		
Opening Hymn	<i>"This Is My Father's World"</i>	No. 824
Greeting and Prayer		
Poem - A Public Health Nurse, by Dena Eichelberger		Kathy Marcus
Scripture	<i>Proverbs 21:2 -3 &amp; Proverbs 23:12</i>	Linda Wieland
Scripture	<i>Matthew 5:16</i>	CJ Osborn
Eulogy	Tanya Miller & Christine Piper, Dena's Daughters	
Message		Pastor Dean E. Johnson
Special Music	<i>"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"</i>	Kevin Wieland
Apostles' Creed, Prayers & The Lord's Prayer		
Blessing		
Closing Hymn	<i>"Lift High the Cross"</i>	No. 660
Recessional	<i>"Somewhere Over The Rainbow"</i>	Israel Kamakawiwo'ole
Postlude		

## **Interment**

Riverside Cemetery  
Spencer, Iowa