

In Loving Memory

Mary Wood Fossen, 81, of Sturgis SD, passed away December 30th, with her daughters surrounding her at Monument Health in Rapid City. Mary possessed a caring heart and dedicated much of her life to helping those like herself who struggled with addiction. Her time spent mentoring others has changed many lives for the better and led to many lifelong friendships. Mary was deeply curious and always sought to know the world, and herself, better, through travel, deep conversations and inward reflection. She touched many lives serving as a friend, a mentor, a mother and a grandmother.

Mary was born on April 3rd, 1944, in Deadwood, South Dakota, to Robert Wood and Helen (Jones) Wood. She graduated high school from Sturgis Brown in 1962, and shortly thereafter moved to San Francisco to go to dental hygienist school. There, she met Jose Barreno and brought two daughters into the world, Paloma (Toni) and Pilar. During her young years in parenthood she spent time in San Francisco and Albuquerque before relocating back to Sturgis. Mary went on to college at Black Hills State University completing her bachelor's degree in sociology, while being employed at Black Hills Special Services. After graduating she devoted countless hours as a drug and alcohol counselor with Compass Point. Prioritizing rehabilitation over punishment, Mary was a tireless advocate. She met people where they were at, and helped them get to where they were trying to go.

In 1994, Mary married the love of her life George Fossen and they embarked on a wonderful 23-year journey together. When they married she gained two step-sons, Skip and Geoff. George and Mary enjoyed traveling and riding their motorcycles throughout the Black Hills. They spent a lot of their time at home, helping care for their grandchildren who lived just across the yard. After George's passing in 2017 she joined her sister in their historic family home where she had raised her children by the pond.

Mary is revered in many people's hearts from all walks of life. She is remembered for her loving and caring free spirit. Throughout AA meetings, sponsorships and volunteer hours she has made numerous friends from all over the world. She is survived by her sister, Susan Writer; daughters, Paloma (Dean) Kinney and Pilar (Mark) Bruch; step sons, Skip (Pat) Fossen and Geoffry Fossen; grandchildren, Cole (Robin) Sawyer, Faryn (Kadin) Sawyer, Kelsey Kinney, Luke Bruch; great grandson, Koen Bestgen; cousins, Margie Jones, Ginny Jones, and Judy Fowlkes; nieces and nephews, Jason (Erin) Writer, Zachary (Alex) Writer, Gwen (Josh) McDonald; special friend, George Gerig, and many friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations could be made to Compass Point and mailed to their office at 1807 Williams Street, Sturgis, South Dakota 57785.

Condolences may be left at www.kinkadefunerals.com.

A private family burial will be held at a later date.



Mary K. Wood-Fossen

April 3, 1944 ~ December 30, 2025

In Loving Memory Of
Mary Katherine Wood-Fossen

Born

April 3, 1944
Deadwood, South Dakota

Died

December 30, 2025
Rapid City, South Dakota

Memorial Service

Tuesday, January 6, 2026, 11:00 a.m.
Kinkade Funeral Chapel
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiant

The Reverend Robin Pierre

Musician

Sarah Nelson

Musical Selection

“Bright Morning Stars” “Holy, Holy, Holy”
“Wildwood Flower” “Amazing Grace”
“The Stroll” “We’ll Sing in the Sunshine”
“Down to the River to Pray”
Recessional: “I’ll Fly Away”

Honorary Pallbearers

Karen Haynes Jose Barreno Loretta Solsbery
Eileen Travis George Gerig
And a lifetime of beloved relatives and friends

Final Resting Place

(At a Later date)
Bear Butte Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota

*All are welcome to join the family for lunch at
Loud American Sturgis, immediately following the service.
Thank you for your presence and condolences.*



Faith...

*When we walk to the edge
Of all the light we have,
And take that step into the
Darkness of the unknown,
We must believe that one of
Two things will happen...*

*There will be something
Solid for us to stand on, or
We will be taught how to fly.*

Jan Davidson '86

