

## *Spring Garden*

*So when I looked at those flowers,*

*I was looking at God.*

*For they blossomed in His sun,*

*and grew in His sod.*

*And each lovely flower  
was a "voice from above,"*

*that whispered a message*

*of kindness and love.*

*For I feel in my heart,*

*and I know you do, too,*

*That God speaks to us all  
through the kind things we do.*

*And when I looked at those flowers,*

*I couldn't help but feel,*

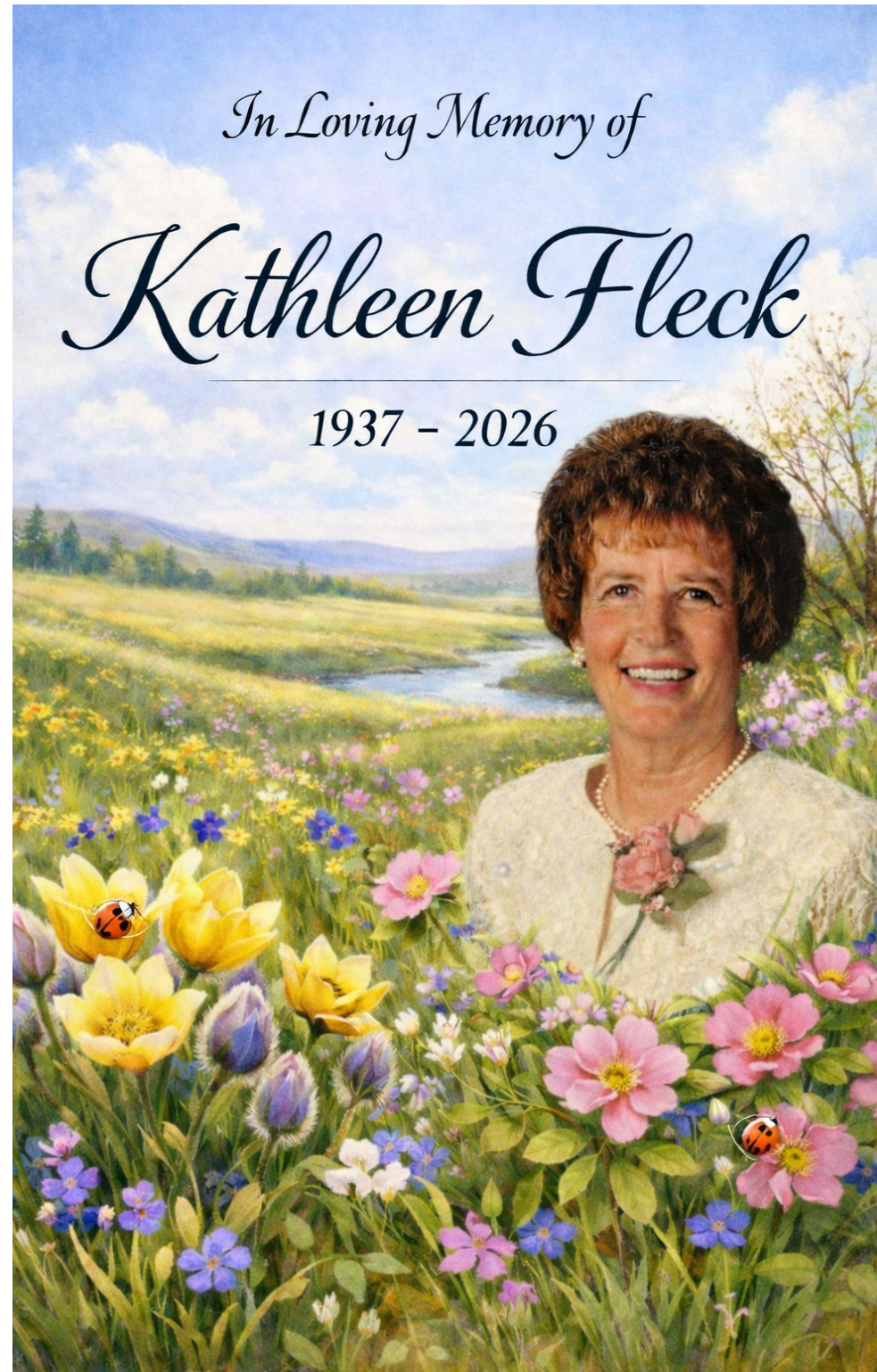
*that they brought heaven nearer*

*and made God so real.*

*~ Helen Steiner Rice ~*



Scan the QR code to  
watch Kathleen's  
Celebration of Life  
Tribute video.



*In Loving Memory of*

# *Kathleen Fleck*

1937 - 2026

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Kathleen "Kay" Fleck on March 25, 2026, at the age of 88. A woman of sharp intellect, deep faith, and an unbreakable work ethic, Kathleen remained active in the operation of her farm/ranch until her final days.

Born on October 15, 1937, in Bismarck, to William and Eileen (Doerner) Kirsch, Kathleen was a "city girl" growing up. She lived on Fifth Street Bismarck, raised by her mother and her grandparents, August and Isabel (Brick) Doerner. Kathleen's early years were filled with music and performances. She learned to play the piano at a young age, sang in the choir, and was a majorette at St. Mary's High School. Her talent was so significant that she was offered the opportunity to attend the Juilliard School of Music in New York City; however, she chose a different path. She attended the University of North Dakota, where she was a member of the Pi Beta Phi sorority. A dedicated student, she graduated in just three and a half years with a major in Social Work and a minor in Spanish. After interning in Valley City and with Morton County Social Services, Kathleen then taught at the local school in Breien, North Dakota. Kathleen met the love of her life, Emanuel Fleck Sr., through mutual friends. They married in May 1960, and Kathleen gracefully transitioned from city life to the role of a farm and ranch wife. Together they raised four children: Emanuel Jr. (born 1961), Colette (1962), William (1966), and Derek (1978).

Kathleen became an integral part of the farm's daily operations. She was a prolific gardener, tending to numerous produce, flower, and rock gardens. It was said that if there was an open pile of dirt anywhere on the property, Kathleen would find a way to plant flowers in it. Her dedication to the land was later recognized with honors from the Morton County Farm Soil Conservation and NDSU Awards. Kathleen was a trailblazer in her community. She served on the Flasher County School Board for nine years and was a founding member who voted to move the football field to its current location. Breaking barriers, she also served as the first female director on the Farmers Home Administration Board.

Once her youngest child entered school, Kathleen returned to her roots in social work. For eleven years, she served Sioux County in Fort Yates, where she founded the highly successful TWEP Program for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Her impact was so profound that the program's success was featured in published articles. She eventually transitioned to West Central Human Services and North Dakota Health Tracks, where she worked until her retirement. In October 1987, Kathleen became a widow at the age of 49. With characteristic resolve, she chose to stay on the farm and ranch and raise her youngest son. Though she endured the heartbreaking loss of her son, Derek, in 1998, her resilience and "can-do" attitude never wavered. She never complained and was always there to help a family member in need.

A devout Catholic, Kathleen shared her musical gifts with St. Anthony Catholic Church for many years as an organist and singer, often organizing music for local weddings. She was also a proud member of the Eagles. In her later years, Kathleen's zest for life only grew. She became a passionate football fan in her late 70s, specifically following the careers of Tom Brady and the Patriots and Buccaneers. She was an avid collector of antiques and teacups, ladybug and penguin-themed items, and football memorabilia. She was also an avid reader and especially loved romance novels. She loved to travel, visiting every state surrounding North Dakota, especially Detroit Lakes and Pelican Rapids in Minnesota, as well as Hawaii, Acapulco, Mexico, and New York. Closer to home, she loved "cruising" the gravel roads in her 1996 Dodge Dakota with her daughter, Colette, to check the crops and pastures. Kathleen was known for her "good sense," her penchant for giving direct advice, and her unwavering positivity. Above all, she cherished the time spent visiting and laughing with her grandchildren.

Kathleen is survived by her children, Emanuel Jr. (Linda), Colette, and William; grandchildren, Amanda and Jesse Berger, Brandon, William, Maiya, August, and Markus Fleck; great-grandchildren, Colten Berger and Payton Berger; sister-in-law Darlene Fleck; brother-in-law, Joseph (Janice) Fleck; former daughter-in-law, Amy Fleck; and many nieces and nephews, cousins, friends and former colleagues.

Kathleen is preceded in death by her youngest son, Derek; husband of 27 years, Emanuel Sr., her parents, Eileen & William Kirsch; in-laws, Matthew & Ludmilla Fleck; stepmother, Myrne Kirsch; several brothers & sisters-in-law, John & Maggie Fleck, Gabe & Ottilia Schmidt, Frank Fleck & Angie Fleck Doll, Leo & Cecelia Fleck, Adam Fleck, John & Margaret Schmidt, Pete & Betty Fleck, Mike & Katie Fleck, George & Ludmilla Ferderer, & Leonard & Hildegard Steckler; & uncle, Leon Doerner Sr.

Kathleen will be forever in our hearts. If we forget to mention anything, she will let us know. The family would like to thank Sanford Health staff for their wonderful care in her final days.

<b>Rosary &amp; Parish Vigil</b>	Sunday, March 29, 2026; 6:00 PM
<b>Prisider</b>	Deacon Gary Mizeur
<b>Funeral Liturgy</b>	Monday, March 30, 2026; 2:00 PM
<b>Celebrant</b>	Spirit of Life Catholic Church, Mandan, ND Fr. Dennis Schafer
<b>Musicians</b>	Jeremy & Carrie Davis
<b>Casketbearers</b>	August Fleck, William Fleck, Colten Berger, John Steckler George Ferderer, Myron Steckler, Francis Fleck, & Aaron Fleck
<b>Honorary Casketbearers</b>	Leon Doerner Jr., John Doerner Todd Doerner, & Rick Doerner
<b>Lectors</b>	Payton Berger & William Fleck
<b>Preludes</b>	<i>"The Old Rugged Cross" &amp; "The Summons"</i>
<b>Processional Song</b>	<i>"Be Not Afraid"</i>
<i>Liturgy of the Word</i>	
<b>Old Testament Reading</b>	Wisdom 4:7-15
<b>Response</b>	Psalm 23
<i>"The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want."</i>	
<b>New Testament Reading</b>	Romans 6:3-4, 8-9
<b>Gospel Reading</b>	Matthew 11:25-30
<b>Homily</b>	
<i>Liturgy of the Eucharist</i>	
<b>Preparation of Gifts Song</b>	<i>"How Great Thou Art"</i>
<b>Presentation of Gifts</b>	Amanda & Payton Berger & Maiya & Markus Fleck
<b>Eucharistic Prayer</b>	
<b>Communion Songs</b>	<i>"I am the Bread of Life"</i> <i>"Peace is Flowing Like a River"</i>
<b>Communion Meditation</b>	
<b>Final Commendation</b>	<i>"Song of Farewell"</i>
<b>Closing Song</b>	<i>"Lead Me Lord"</i>
<b>Committal Service</b>	<b>Mandan Union Cemetery</b> Mandan, North Dakota
<i>The family invites you for food &amp; fellowship at the Mandan Eagles immediately following the burial service.</i>	