



## Ramona Mary Starkey

March 17, 1933 - February 5, 2020

(nee Kasel)

Age 86, of St. Paul

Ramona was preceded in death and deeply saddened by the loss of her parents, Math & Rosemary (nee Wagner) Kasel; brother, Jerry Kasel, former husband Jerry Starkey, and great granddaughter RoseMary.

Ramona is survived by her children, Lou Ann (Dan Horgan) of Wisconsin Rapids, Mary Jo (Jay Larsen) of Shakopee, MN, Mike (Monica) of River Falls, WI, Jim (Lynn) of Menomonie, WI, Barbara Jean (Mark Elliott) of West St. Paul, MN, Donna Lynn (Mark Smeltzer) of Mahtomedi, MN.; her brothers Jack (Betty), Matt (Sandi) and Ray (Gloria)sister Rosemary (Vic); and sister-in-law, Veronica; her grandchildren Jenna, Abigail, Patrick, Hannah, Nicholas, Molly, David, Daniel, Jacob, Mitchell, Kassandra, Joey, Alyssa, Joshua, Angela, and Dominic; and her great grandchildren Etana, Liam, SundayRose, Elias, Everly, Alivia, Amelia, Jameson, Jude, Mazie, and Lena,

Mom (Ramona) was born in her family home in Almena, WI in March of 1933. She and her five siblings grew up in a house without running water. Her brother Matt can attest to the challenges of bringing in water from the yard for cooking and bathing. She attended school in a one room schoolhouse for her primary grades, and graduated from Barron (WI) High School at a time when girls from her family's region of rural Wisconsin didn't necessarily finish high school. As the oldest of six she worked hard to help her mom any way she was needed....

Although her life of almost 87 years was not always a smooth path, there were of course many joys along the way; one of these being her marriage in 1953 to Jerry. While the early years consisted of the daily sacrifices that come with the life of an Army wife, including long absences, this time period resulted in the births of their first two daughters. Shortly following the end of Jerry's military service, the young family eventually settled in White

Bear Lake, where they welcomed their two boys, followed by the two youngest girls. Mom always said that she planned out her children's births, so that they each had a playmate. In 1968, the family-of-eight moved to a small farm near Elmwood, WI. Eight years later the family was faced with monumental change as mom's marriage of twenty-one years came to an end. Ramona packed up her two youngest daughters and moved to St Paul while the boys stayed with their dad to finish their final years of high school. As the sitcom *One Day at a Time* arose in popularity, mom adjusted to life as a single mother through hard work and determination. While their new life was not quite as humorous or easy sailing as Ann Romano's or the Cooper girls', mom never missed the opportunity to tune in and dance to the theme song of the show as if no one was watching, but her girls were watching. It is a memory they will always hold dear.

Mom succeeded in raising her two youngest into adulthood while doing her best to make sure that the family unit remained tight. Holidays and special occasions were always celebrated with her six children. Later on the group was joined by spouses and eventually grandchildren. They would all huddle in the two bedroom apartment with mom making sure her group was happy and more specifically, well-fed.

Mom made the best kolaches, cinnamon twists, bismarcks, apple kuchen, Swedish tea rings, bread, and cocoa-and-toast; soups (homemade vegetable, green bean, and beef barley); homemade noodles, baked beans, potato salad, cole slaw, chicken-almond, chicken cacciatore, roast beef with homemade dumplings, and the list goes on and on. She would always make sure there was color on your plate.

She loved to pick berries and make jelly as well. She was well deserving of the crown and title "Queen of the Berry Pickers," as few could pick longer or faster than she could. This was more than likely due to the fact that she would not eat a single berry while still at the patch in picking mode. I am sure she also got the "picking gene" from Gramma and Grandpa Kasel. She was picking berries until the end, maneuvering through the berry patches in her wheelchair when necessary.

Mom started a Christmas tradition surrounding her love for food, cooking, baking and even berry picking: The Favorite Food Gift. Different foods, one of the most popular being her famous homemade noodles, would be piled high on a tray as each family member would come by and choose their favorite. Most of the time, everyone would take what looked best to them, but if they were "wrong" and the item they had chosen had not been made with them in mind, or if she has made something else special for them, she would give them a second chance to pick another food.

These giving qualities and hard work brightened so many lives as she assisted many elderly with their cleaning and laundry, but most importantly she was there as a friend, and she made many friends while employed for nineteen years at the Masonic Home in Bloomington. She could make a friend wherever she went, a quality she shared with her father, even if she never really saw it that way.

She was an avid fan of 60 Minutes, WCCO radio, and the Twins and Vikings. She would always be in attendance at every Kasel and Wagner family reunion, and even up until last year, Mom would celebrate high school reunions. She would always be ready to step on the dance floor at weddings for a polka, even if that meant rolling around in her wheelchair.

She had her favorite things like coffee, coffee cream, butter, cheese, oranges, pickles (and making them too), pecans, a half a beer, a brandy-sour (back in the day), Bailey's Irish Cream, a brandy Alexander, any kind of meat, especially a little piece to cut the sweetness of a dessert, a beautiful sunset, a hoarfrost, the fall colors, knocking on someone's door to ask if she could pick their lilacs, butterflies, cardinals and oddly enough, ironing. But when it all came down to it, her most favorite thing in life was her family. Mom was known for her kindness and her ability to truly listen without judgement, her wonderful vocal inflections, answering your cooking questions, talking to children, and wrapping piles of Christmas presents. She also loved to tell her stories, and she was more than happy to sit and listen to one of your own; she loved getting a perm, a fresh fallen snow, making cream puffs at 10 o'clock at night, and tending to her flowers and garden. But again, most of all, she loved loving her family, and she was immensely proud of each and every member. She will be greatly missed, and remembered by all of us every single day.

This Tuesday, February 11, 2020, there will be a Memorial Mass at 11am at the Church of St. Joseph, 1154 Seminole Ave, West St. Paul, with a gathering of friends and family two hours prior to the service. We ask that those who plan on attending choose to wear attire from the following categories: Christmas (she LOVED Christmas), St. Patrick's Day (her birthday!), the 4th of July (anything "the flag": red, white, or blue, as she was very proud of our country), Vikings, or Twins (for this day, we ask that everyone is a Minnesota fan). By dressing in such a way, we aim to honor our Mom, Grandmother, and friend in the best way we know how as she loved dressing up for every one of these occasions.

# Events

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**FEB** **Gathering of Family and Friends** 09:00AM - 11:00AM

**11**

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Church of St. Joseph

1154 Seminole Avenue, West Saint Paul, MN, US, 55118

**FEB** **Memorial Mass** 11:00AM - 12:00PM

**11**

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Church of St. Joseph

1154 Seminole Avenue, West Saint Paul, MN, US, 55118

# Comments

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“ 9 files added to the tribute wall



**Jamie Larsen** - February 19 at 02:50 PM

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Ramona Mary Starkey.



February 10 at 03:05 PM

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“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ramona Mary Starkey.



February 10 at 02:32 PM

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“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Ramona Mary Starkey.



February 10 at 09:13 AM

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“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Ramona Mary Starkey.



February 09 at 11:22 AM

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“ For every photo, there are a hundred more memories. How lucky I am to have had a Gramma like you for more than 30 years.



**Kassandra Gilbert** - February 08 at 10:34 PM

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“ So many sweet memories. Gramma we sure are going to miss you!



**Jamie** - February 08 at 10:15 PM

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“ Raymond Kasel lit a candle in memory of Ramona Mary Starkey



**Raymond Kasel** - February 08 at 08:48 PM