



Donna R. Brinkman

April 2, 1960 - November 26, 2025

Donna Rae Brinkman, age 65, of Kankakee, Illinois, passed away on November 26, 2025, at St. Mary's Hospital.

Donna was born on April 2, 1960, in Kankakee to Edward and Mildred (Wilkey) Girot. She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank Potchebski, who passed away on June 5, 2024.

Throughout her life, Donna maintained a sense of ease, finding contentment and happiness in life's simple pleasures. She was thoughtful, generous, and kind to others. A loving and devoted parent, she always put her children's needs before her own. While she was a dedicated, hard-working professional in the medical billing field, she balanced her career with what mattered most to her.

She spent her life surrounded by family and lifelong friends, and particularly cherished time with her grandchildren. She had an effortless sense of humor, always quick to share a laugh with anyone. She loved to cook and loved music of all kinds. She was the best euchre partner. She loved summertime, spending long days outside or in the pool. She will be missed dearly by her friends and family.

Donna is survived by her children: Elliot (Stephany) Brinkman of Champaign, IL, and Jessica (Jamar) Smith of Modena, Italy. She is also survived by her sister Patricia (Grant) Appell of Kankakee; brothers Gary Girot of Bourbonnais, IL, and James Girot of Connersville, IN; sister-in-law Terri Girot; and brother-in-law Gary Gentry. She leaves behind six grandchildren: Claire,

Simone, and Adrienne Brinkman, and Makhi, Mia, and Preston Smith.
She was also preceded in death by her brother Michael Girot and her sister
Rosemary "Tudy" Gentry.

A visitation will be held on Saturday, December 20th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00
p.m. at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Kankakee (1480 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901), with brief remarks from family beginning at 12:00 p.m.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

DEC 20. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Kankakee - Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home
1480 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Family Sharing

DEC 20. 12:00 PM (CT)

Kankakee - Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home
1480 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Tribute Wall

LM

“ Laura M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donna R. Brinkman.

Laura M. - December 20, 2025 at 09:09 AM

KR

“ Donna was an amazing person! She loved her kids so much, and she treated me like a son. She will always be very missed.

Kyle Rose - December 18, 2025 at 09:13 PM

SD

“ Donna was my youngest aunt. Seems that we share many things in common from the love of the outdoors, to appreciating diverse genres of music, to cooking. I actually “inherited” her Easy Bake Oven when I was young after she had outgrown it. Because of her oven, and watching Aunt Pat bake cakes, I also learned to love baking. I am very grateful for having joined Aunt Donna and Aunt Pat for breakfast a couple of years ago while my husband and I were in town from Texas. She was as kind and funny as I remember. I know she will be missed immensely by friends and family!

Stephanie (Giro) Denoyer - December 17, 2025 at 04:48 PM

SF

“ We have known Donna and her family for many, many years. Her sister Pat has been like a sister to me since we meet 42 years ago. Donna was very helpful with business advice. Many tears were shed for Donna and her entire family the night she died. She will be missed by everyone who knew her.

Sergeant Family - December 10, 2025 at 01:16 PM

DB

“ I met Donna through her sister Pat. We have been friends for the last couple of years. She was fun to be with and we enjoyed Culver’s together. It was a pleasure to know her. She loved talking about her family. She will be missed. Deb Ball

Deb Ball - December 09, 2025 at 12:17 AM

SF

“ Donna was just beautiful inside and out. She raised her two beautiful children to be as kind, thoughtful, smart and fun as she was. She nurtured her grandchildren with the same fun and love. Donna will be so very missed by our family.

Slutzky Family - December 07, 2025 at 11:39 PM

AR

“ I worked with Donna for a short time, but in that year we shared many stories and laughs together. Her kids and grandchildren were her pride and joy. My deepest sympathies to her family and friends
❤️

Aimee Ramadan - December 07, 2025 at 11:15 AM

NG

“ Met Donna at Riverside and we worked together for several years. She was the best coworker. Sending love and hugs to the entire family

Nancy Gartner - December 07, 2025 at 10:08 AM

VV

“ Donna had been a good friend to me for several years. We originally met at Riverside. She was such a sweet caring individual. We had several breakfast or lunch dates since Donna had retired to catch up on our lives. I had just had breakfast with her a couple of weeks prior to her passing. I will surely miss those chats. Sincere condolences to you Jessica and Elliot. I know how much she loved you both and you were always her first priority. May God bless the entire family during this very difficult time.
Ginger

Virginia Viall - December 07, 2025 at 08:23 AM

DF

“ Deb Foltz lit a candle in memory of Donna R. Brinkman



Deb Foltz - December 06, 2025 at 07:50 PM