



Stephanie J. Waterman

November 27, 1948 - October 10, 2025

Stephanie J. Waterman, age 76, of Kankakee passed away Friday, October 10, 2025. She was born November 27, 1948 in Chicago, the daughter of Donald & Eunice (Goldman) Ceraulo. Stephanie married Ralph Waterman on February 19, 2005 at Church of God Worship Center in Bourbonnais.

Stephanie was an Inventory Manager for International Harvester from 1970-1992 and then worked for Hollymatic Corporation from 2007-2015. She studied at Triton College and Harper College. She was a member of Church of God Worship Center in Bourbonnais.

Our world feels quieter. Our hearts are heavier than ever as we say goodbye to the heart of our family our Mom/Wife/Sister/Grandma/Great Grandma/Friend Steph Waterman. She had a heart of gold. The kind of person who left a mark wherever she went. You couldn't take her anywhere without running into someone she knew (even towns over). She remembered names, faces, stories. People gravitated toward her light.

She loved her kids and grandkids more than anything. Some of our best memories at family get-togethers were sitting around the table with her, playing Mexican Train dominoes, cards, and her favorite, poker. She was always competitive, always laughing, always keeping us on our toes. She passed down more than just love; she passed down traditions. She never forgot to send a card for a birthday, holiday, or celebration. She could always be counted on to bring a sweet treat to a party.

She was the strongest woman, a survivor, a warrior, a true force. She had

lived through storms most people couldn't imagine and still stood tall with love in her heart and fire in her spirit.

And yes, she was also our beloved crazy cat lady, and proud of it. Her cats were spoiled, and she gave everything she had to the people (and animals) she loved.

She wasn't just part of our family; she was the soul of it. She was the glue, the laughter, the warmth, and the unconditional love. Losing her feels like losing a piece of ourselves. She will always be with us in our hearts, in our memories, and in the way we love each other, just like she taught us.

Surviving are her husband of 20 years, Ralph Waterman of Kankakee; two daughters, Janine Niemiec (Dan Schneider) of Woodridge and Cheryl (Ernie) Manak of Downers Grove; one sister, Patricia Schneider of Chicago; three grandchildren; Rebecca Niemiec (Brad Hilgen), Abigail Manak, and Mason Manak; two great-grandchildren, Skylar Hilgen and Colton Hilgen; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Stephaine is preceded in death by her parents; first husband, John Cozzi; second husband, Jack Schmelebeck; and one brother-in-law, Alan Schneider.

Visitation will be held from 9-10:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 16, 2025 at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais. A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. at Church of God Worship Center in Bourbonnais. Rev. Rick Hill will officiate the service. Interment will follow at All Saints Cemetery in Bourbonnais.

There will be a celebration of Stephanie's life the last weekend in November in the Chicago area. More details to follow.

Memorials may be made to the family wishes.

Cemetery Details

All Saints Cemetery

1839 W. Route 102
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 933-2342

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **16**. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Funeral Service

OCT **16**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Church of God Worship Center
420 Cardinal Drive
Bradley, IL 60915
<http://www.myworshipcenter.net>

Tribute Wall

JN

“ *Janine Niemiec lit a candle in memory of Stephanie J. Waterman*



Janine Niemiec - March 25 at 11:41 AM

JN

Thinking of you mom. Miss you so much

Janine Niemiec - March 25 at 11:42 AM

JN

“ *Missing you everyday Mom. Living everyday with a great memory of you. ❤️. Hope you are peaceful and pain free now.*

Janine Niemiec - November 12, 2025 at 04:23 PM