



Rita Claire Pilkey

July 4, 1933 - November 18, 2017

Rita Claire Pilkey (Peterson) joined her beloved family members in Heaven on Saturday, November 18th. She was surrounded by her husband and children.

Rita was born on July 4th, 1933 in Grand Forks, North Dakota to loving parents, Winifred Ann and James Joseph Peterson. She was the oldest sister to her wonderful siblings, Danny, Kathleen, Jack, Liz, and Bill. She attended Catholic school growing up where her faith blossomed. Music and literature were an important part of her young life. She carried her love of singing and reading with her throughout her life.

She married her husband, Charlie Pilkey and moved to Bellingham, Washington. During their 65 years of loving marriage, Rita was an extraordinary mother to 5 children, Debbie, Diane, Denise, Donna, and David. One of her many gifts was to make each of her children believe that they were truly her favorite child. She was always a pillar of strength and wisdom. She was a voice of reason, and always had an answer to any question. Her love was absolutely immeasurable and completely unconditional. She was the true balance and core of the family. Her family was the center of her world, and her grandchildren and great grandchildren were the lights of her life. Nothing made her happier than playing with her beloved great grandchildren—they all love their Gram so very much.

Rita instilled her great love of music into each of her children. She had an angelic singing voice and loved singing in the choir at Assumption Parish for many years. She made lifelong friends there. She enjoyed spending time in her beautiful backyard, which was always filled with gorgeous flowers in bloom, tended to by Charlie.

Rita had a strong Catholic faith, which allowed her to survive the ups and downs of life. She was one of the strongest people any of us could ever imagine. She lost 2 of her sweet daughters to cancer far too young. She had grave health problems over the past 10 years that most people would never recover from. But her will to live was transcendent. She wanted to spend more time with her family, and put in more physical and emotional effort to live than seemed humanly possible. And she not only lived, but thrived. She held onto her magnificent kindness, love, and grace and continued to share it with the world for many more years. All of us, her family, are so grateful for her heroic efforts, as we were able to spend so much more wonderful time with her, and she was able to meet more of her, now seven, great grandchildren.

Rita had a special way of making everyone she met feel as if they were an old friend. She would look at people with such kindness and they would immediately feel how much she cared about them. No one she met could ever forget her, and her former nurses would always remember when and where they helped Rita in the past, and were so very happy to see her again. Countless staff members at Mt. Baker Care Center & Summit Place (where Rita lived the past year) said Rita was their absolute favorite resident, because she was just so sweet, thoughtful, and giving.

We will all miss her so much, but we know she has been reunited with her daughters, Debbie & Denise, brothers Danny & Jack, and her parents in Heaven. Her husband Charlie, daughters Diane & Donna, son David, sisters Kathleen & Liz, brother Bill, grandchildren Tyson, Michael, Katrina, Kaili,

Maggie, & Seth, great grandchildren Sereia, Silas, Penelope, Adriana, Vanessa, Kobe Claire, & Finnegan, and her nieces, nephews, and dear friends will all live on with joyful memories and Rita's radiant love blazing in their hearts.

A memorial mass will be held at The Church of the Assumption at 2116 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225, on Wednesday, November 22, 2017 at 1pm with reception following. A graveside service will take place at a later date. Please join her family to remember Rita fondly and celebrate the remarkable woman she was.

Tribute Wall

DR

“ We are so sorry to hear of Rita’s passing she was such a sweet person no matter how sick she was she would always know Jackie every time she saw her always wanted a hug ,she will be missed by all .Will miss that great smile praying for your family and thinking of you Charles what a great husband and father you have been prayers your way Dale and Jackie Rick

Dale and Jackie Rick - November 18, 2017 at 12:00 AM

TE

“ Charlie and family,
I have known Rita for many years. I sang with her for several years in the Assumption choir and I can tell you she had the most beautiful alto voice. Singing soprano myself, I especially loved being next to her when we sang Silent Night, she carried the alto part so wonderfully. She was such a lovely lady and you could see the kindness radiate from her eyes. She left so many people grateful to have known her. I pray that your memories will bring you comfort.
Teresa Eiden

Teresa Eiden - November 18, 2017 at 12:00 AM

TA

“ I’m so sorry for your family’s loss. I hope you find comfort in knowing that your loved one is safe in the memory of God, who will remember every detail about her & bring her back again. John 5:28,29. You have my condolences.

Tara - November 18, 2017 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ *I'm sorry for your great loss. Such beautiful sentiments. She sounded like a really sweet lady. When we lose special ones who touch our hearts the grief experienced may seem unbearable at times. God heals the broken-hearted, Psalm 147:3. We look forward to the day when sickness pain and death will be a thing of the past, Revelation 21:4*

Danielle - November 18, 2017 at 12:00 AM