



Gloria Mae Vanderbeck

MAY 1, 1926 - OCT 6, 2022



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Gloria Mae Vanderbeck

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On Thursday, October 6, 2022, Gloria Mae Vanderbeck transitioned from her earthly journey to her eternal place in the Great Beyond.

A memorial service will be held on Tuesday, October 18th at 10:30 a.m. in the John Knox Village Chapel in Weslaco.

Gloria was born at home on May 1, 1926 in Benton Harbor, Michigan. She survived her father, Stanley George Vanderbeck Sr, her mother, Mathilda Furst Vanderbeck, and her brother, Stanley George Vanderbeck Jr.

She is survived by her niece, Elaine Gast of FL, her niece, Susan Campbell of IL, her nephew, Ronald Vanderbeck of MI, and five grand nephews and seven grand grand children located all over the world.

Gloria grew up in a neighborhood with one girl and lots and tots of boys. She learned to play football, baseball, but was too short for basketball. She was really good at marbles. It wasn't long before the principal forbid her bringing marbles to school because too many boys complained.

Upon entering 6th grade students could sign up for band and learn an instrument. Her brother played the cornet, but Gloria wanted to play the French horn. Her teeth weren't right, so she had to settle for a clarinet. The next year she went into seventh grade at Junior High. When she tried out for band, she got 3rd chair clarinet. She never got any better or worse as she was 3rd chair for 6 years.

The summer before 9th grade, Gloria and her mother went to Canada to visit her Canadian relatives. She met some male cousins who had taken engineering drawing in school, which she thought was very interesting. When she returned to enroll in 9th grade, she signed up for engineering drawing, general math, Home Ec., and some other flunky subjects.



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The school objected to the Engineering drawing, but she won out and was allowed to take the class. When she enrolled in 10th and 11th grade she was still taking some funky classes. During the summer between her sophomore and junior year, her mother thought that maybe Gloria could go to college. That summer all her classes were changed to college prep classes.

Someone thought she should take Latin I, but that class was only taught at the Junior High, 12 mile away. Every day she walked or took the bus, there and back. One day it was raining and the city bus went by and didn't stop. She was soaking wet when she got back to high school.

The next day the sun was shining and she was late getting out of class, but the bus was waiting for her. She never had to walk again. A lot of things took place during her junior year in High School. Her curriculum was changed and she got her first part time job.

Her junior year was 1942 and the U.S. was engaged in WWII. Saranac Machine Co. was a local defense plant. The company was tired of training boys in their engineering department and then having them drafted. As a last resort they called the high school asking if any girls had taken mechanical drawing. Gloria qualified and was given a part time job in their engineering department.

She worked part time and full time for them for eight years. She graduated high school in 1944 and was salutatorian in a class of 256. Saranac Machine Co. always encouraged Gloria to further her education. So when Lake Michigan College was proposed, they suggested she enroll.

So as not to miss too much work, when enrollment opened she was first in line and the very first student to enroll. (The first year cost including tuition, books, paper, pencils, and bus fare was \$209.) That first year the Jr. College didn't have any facilities so they used the high school from 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

Only a few students had cars, so the rest depended on the bus. Not to worry, the driver was her ever loving driver of Latin I days. She finished Jr. College and went to Western Michigan University where she earned her BS Degree and teaching certificate.

She never stopped going to school as long as someone would help foot the bill: Summers were spent learning at universities in Colorado, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Over the years she



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earned her MS Degree at the University of Illinois and her Ep.S. Degree at Western Michigan University.

She first taught math for 17 years at Benton Harbor High School. Then she went to Lakeshore Public Schools as Director of Curriculum and Personnel for another 17 years. She taught at Michigan State University and briefly at Pan American University in Texas.

She retired in 1985 and moved to Texas in 1988. Gloria also encouraged others to excel. She established a scholarship fund at Lake Michigan Jr. College. Students earning an A in a math class were refunded tuition costs for that course.

Gloria was always athletic and loved playing golf. She earned many awards and spent enjoyable years playing the courses in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. She spent many years in her retirement home in Mission, Texas, where she was loved and respected.

In her later years she resided at John Knox Village in Weslaco, Texas. Sadly she passed away after 96 years of an exemplary life.



Tribute Wall

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MC

McCaleb Funeral Home & Sacred Park Cemetery posted:

McCaleb Funeral Home & Sacred Park Cemetery created a Webcast in memory of Gloria Mae Vanderbeck

October 27 at 7:00 PM

BC

Barbara Craig posted:

The Board of Trustees, President, Faculty, Staff, Students, and Alumni of Lake Michigan College celebrate the life and legacy of its most special alumna. Gloria's legacy lives on today in her scholarship fund that challenges and supports higher level math students, and in the wonderful representation she presents of a life long learner. We are proud that she decided to be a member of our first graduating class, and are deeply grateful for her exponential gifts to our students.

October 27 at 6:34 AM

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KP

Karen Hahn Bush-Platts posted:

One of my favorite teachers. I posted her obituary on Benton Harbor & St. Joseph, Michigan Memories on Facebook. Lots of nice comments, if the family can get access. Karen Hahn Bush-Platts

October 20 at 6:17 PM

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BL

Barbara Mummaw Lange posted:

Miss Vanderbeck was the best math teacher I ever had at Benton Harbor High School. She was one of the reasons I became a math teacher. I remember celebrating in class her earning her pilots license. I then was fortunate enough to get hired at Lakeshore Public Schools when she was assistant superintendent. She never forgot what it was like to be a teacher. I also remember she was a classmate of my mom, Aneita Mummaw, at Benton Harbor. I was very touched a few years back to receive a letter from her letting me know what she had done and where she was living. She was a person I feel honored to have known.

October 20 at 9:10 AM

NA

Nancy Aldrich posted:

Gloria was an amazing lady. I met her here at John Knox Village in the mid 2010s. She knew what she wanted, and was not shy in stating her opinions, which were usually right. She demanded, in a sweet way, excellence in everything she did. I appreciated her humor and her intellect, and will cherish her memory!

October 17 at 12:42 PM

BL

Barbara Mummaw Lange October 20 at 9:10 AM

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DW

Dianna Williams posted:

I met Gloria in 1992. We became golfing buddies. Had a great time when playing with her. It was sad for me when we could no longer play together. You are now in Our Lord's hands Gloria. Dianna Williams

October 15 at 9:12 AM

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FF

Friends And Family shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Friends and Family uploaded 1 to the gallery.

October 5 at 7:00 PM





Media

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October 5 at 7:00 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Gloria by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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