



Deborah Ann Knape

June 25, 1949 - November 22, 2023

Deborah Ann Knape (Conlon), 74, formerly of Birmingham, MI, died Nov. 22 in Columbus, Ohio.

Debby was born June 25, 1949 in Louisville, KY, the second of Edward and Ruth Conlons' three daughters. She grew up in Bay Village, OH, where she excelled in school and proudly cheered as a member of the Bay High Rockettes.

She met her husband, Conrad Knape, while attending Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH, where she was a member of Delta Gamma sorority.

Married in 1970, they raised four children, Jeffrey, Jennifer, Christopher and Alexander. Jenny's death from leukemia in 1980 changed Debby in ways that were impossible to measure. She hid her grief by tending to an immaculate home, caring for her boys, cooking delicious meals and building lasting friendships.

Smart and funny, Debby enjoyed playing piano and bridge, collecting dolls, decorating for holidays, visiting with her sisters and crafting with her friend, Jane Murphy. A voracious reader, Debby looked forward to her book and breakfast club gatherings and was seldom without a book in one hand and a cup of coffee or cigarette in the other.

Her Kentucky Derby parties were legendary, filled with glutinous amounts of homemade food and dizzyingly strong mint juleps.

Once her boys were grown she became a beloved preschool teacher at Lutheran Church of The Redeemer in Birmingham.

She was a loving and doting grandmother to eight grandsons, Ben, Will, Tyler, Tim, Cole, Austin, Jack and Luke.

After retiring from teaching, she and Conrad traveled to Ireland for a trip she had dreamed about for decades. Together they also went on countless roadtrips to devour local cuisine (particularly oysters), visit casinos and try whatever spirit was being distilled nearby. They celebrated 50 years of marriage with an unforgettable renewal of vows in 2019.

Over the last ten years of her life Debby suffered from health issues that she stubbornly refused to treat, including depression, alcoholism and diabetes. Her family is grateful to friends who stayed true even when doing so was difficult.

Debby never recovered from Conrad's death in 2021 and had a stroke the same year.

In addition to Conrad and Jenny, she was preceded in death by her parents Edward and Ruth Conlon, and her sisters Penny Conlon and Becky McCauley. She is survived by her three sons, their wives Leann, Amy and Gretchen, and her eight grandsons.

Friends and family will be received at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Admas Ridge, on Monday, December 4, 2023 from 10:00 AM until the time of services at 11:00 AM. Interment will immediately follow in the church cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Conrad & Deborah Knappe Hospitality Scholarship C/O Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association, 225 W, Washtenaw St. Lansing, MI 48933 or <https://www.mihf.org/support.html> (scroll down and click on "Donate"). Online condolences and messages may be shared with the family at rodenbergergray.com.

Arrangements entrusted to Rodenberger-Gray Funeral Home, Napoleon.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Adams Ridge road)
02454 Adams Ridge Road
Defiance, OH 43512

Funeral Service

DEC 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

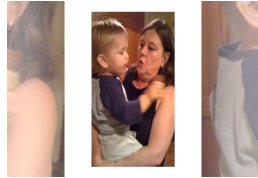
Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Adams Ridge road)
02454 Adams Ridge Road
Defiance, OH 43512

An hour of visitation will be held prior to services

Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Tribute Video*



Rodenberger Funeral Home - December 08, 2023 at 12:14 PM

BC

“ *Brian Christopher planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Deborah Ann Knape.*

Brian Christopher - December 04, 2023 at 09:24 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Deborah Ann Knape.*



December 04, 2023 at 09:24 AM



“ *So very sorry for your loss.*

Debbie Visger - December 01, 2023 at 08:25 AM

TM

“ Terry McClure planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Deborah Ann Knape.

Terry McClure - December 01, 2023 at 07:12 AM



“ Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Deborah Ann Knape.



December 01, 2023 at 07:12 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Deborah Ann Knape.



November 29, 2023 at 07:46 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Deborah Ann Knape.



November 29, 2023 at 02:21 PM



“ *Fairest of All* was purchased for the family of Deborah Ann Knape.



November 29, 2023 at 02:19 PM



“ Office O. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Deborah Ann Knape.

Office O. - November 29, 2023 at 12:07 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Deborah Ann Knape.



November 29, 2023 at 12:07 PM