



Loretta Verhasselt

January 31, 1928 - August 22, 2021

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Loretta Christine (DeCleene) Verhasselt, our beloved mother, sister, wife, grandmother and great-grandmother, passed away peacefully on August 22, 2021 after a visit from Msgr. Stephen Downes. She was surrounded by her close family and supported by the loving prayers of many relatives and friends.

Born January 31, 1928 on the family farm in DePere Wisconsin. Upon graduation from DePere High, Loretta took a position at the Hickory Grove Sanitorium. It was through her friendship at work with her future mother-in-law Josie Verhasselt she met her husband Basil. They were married January 5, 1949 and moved their young family to Santa Barbara California in 1960. Loretta quickly formed deep roots in the community, volunteering extensively at Saint Raphael's Catholic Church, starting as President of the Women's Council in 1962 and again in 1996 as President of the Women's Auxiliary. Loretta was a Founding Member and 2001 Volunteer of the Year of the Santa Barbara Breast Cancer Resource Center and a longtime member of the Ladies of Charity.

She loved to bake bread for her family and to offer homemade bread and

treats to others in a gesture of friendship. Loretta was a great cook, working in the Goleta Valley Junior High Cafeteria for several years before becoming a school bus driver. An avid gardener, she enjoyed “digging in the dirt”, sharing her love of nature and flowers, creatively competing in various Santa Barbara Garden Shows. Loretta was an exceptionally vibrant woman, loving mother and grandmother, dedicated friend, volunteer and organizer. Her laughter, joy of life and knack for bringing people together will be remembered and greatly missed.

Loretta is survived by her sons Jerome (Susan) Verhasselt, Jim (Sharon) Verhasselt and her daughter Karen (Peter) Arnold; her four grandsons Adam Verhasselt, Sam Verhasselt, Gregory (Allison) Arnold, Chris (Kristin) Arnold; and her great-grandchildren, Micah, Oliver, Amelia and Finn Arnold. She is also survived by four DeCleene sisters, Helen Verhasselt, Alice Morrell, Joyce DeCleene, Judy (Bob) Johanski all residing in Wisconsin and her sister-in-law Zita Wessa of Arizona.

Ever devoted to her family, she was preceded in death by her beloved husband Basil Verhasselt, her parents William & Christine DeCleene, and nine siblings Howard DeCleene, Leo DeCleene, Harold (LaVerne) DeCleene, Vic (Leona) DeCleene, Rita (Donald) Boucher, Sister Mary DeCleene, Bernice (Howard) Strenn, Aloysius (Joann) DeCleene and Sister Vonnie DeCleene.

A Vigil Service will be held at Welch-Ryce-Haider Funeral Chapel, 450 Ward Drive on October 15 at 7:00 pm, a Funeral Mass on Saturday October 16 at 9 am at St Raphael’s Church 5444 Hollister Avenue. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to FORCE: Facing Heredity Cancer Empowered www.facingourrisk.org/donate

Previous Events

Vigil

OCT **15**. 7:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider Goleta
450 Ward Dr.
Santa Barbara, CA 93111

Funeral Mass

OCT **16**. 9:00 AM (PT)

St. Raphael Catholic Church
5444 Hollister Ave.
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
<http://www.straphaelsb.com/>

Tribute Wall

MV

“ I have had the good fortune of having had a total of 16 aunts. 12 were related to me by blood, while 5 were related to me by marriage. If those two numbers don't add up to 16 is because of Aunt Loretta. She was my double Aunt, and her three children are my double cousins. She always had double status as a family member.

The thing about Aunt Loretta that I am most thankful for is her role in my life through many California visits and then moving here in 2001. I have been visiting her home for so many years that I feel like it is a part of me. Every time I was near Santa Barbara and she was around, she would make time to visit. She also always tried to include Jim and his family, which I appreciated because I got to know them better as well.

In 2013, my husband Mike Cushner accepted a job as a college instructor in Ventura. We would then have a second home there, 30 miles away. The first person I called to share the news was Aunt Loretta. I knew I would get to visit her more often. On one of our last visits to see Aunt Loretta she told Mike how happy she was that we had found each other.

Aunt Loretta's love was unconditional and allowed me to continue to be part of two big interesting families, even though most of them were thousands of miles away. It has been life affirming having her nearby. We love you and will miss you.

Thank you for being My Aunt Aunt Loretta

Mike Verhasselt

Mike verhasselt - October 14, 2021 at 10:37 PM

KA

Thanks Mike for sharing this beautiful tribute! Mom really welcomed all and had a special place in her life for family. So glad we are double cousins!!

Karen Arnold - October 18, 2021 at 08:28 PM

KA

“ Dear Friends,
If you would like to make a donation, in lieu of flowers, the FORCE link (Face our Risk of Cancer Empowered) was given. Mom's sister Joyce created a Tribute in memory of Loretta. Here is a link to take you directly to that tribute if you would like to make a donation in her memory:

<https://www.facingourrisk.org/tribute/296>

Love, Karen

Karen Arnold - October 14, 2021 at 01:43 AM

KA

“ In loving memory of Mom, a short Video tribute to our amazing and loving Mom!



Karen Arnold - October 14, 2021 at 01:35 AM

IP

What a wonderful life. I feel honored to have known her

Isabelle Patton - October 20, 2021 at 09:27 PM



“ I have very fond memories of my Aunt Loretta. She lived close enough to us in California that I got to visit with her more than most of my Aunts and Uncles. She was always so kind to us and never yelling or scolding (unlike Uncle Basil). She was so active all the time yet she never seemed stressed at all. Over the years, she was always inviting and friendly and she always would feed us if we visited. From what I know and from what I've learned, Loretta lived an amazing life. Her work ethic, commitment to family and loving nature are all what make up that amazing life. I'm so lucky to call her family and I will relish my fond memories of her. RIP Aunt Loretta.

Scott Wessa - September 20, 2021 at 02:36 PM

KA

Thanks Scott for sharing your memories! It was pretty fun growing up with our families hanging out over the holidays, I have many fond memories of our times together.

Karen Arnold - October 18, 2021 at 08:31 PM