



## Gloria D. Hillard

April 1, 1942 - March 31, 2024

Gloria Darlene Hillard, 81, of Kalkaska, passed away on Sunday, March 31, 2024. She was born in Essexville, Michigan, to Nathan and Bessie Letson on April 1, 1942. She loved being born on April Fool's Day. If you visited Gloria on that day, you entered her house at your own peril; for you never knew if it would be booby-trapped with plastic spiders or Vaseline-covered doorknobs. She was always a jokester. She loved mushroaming in the spring with whomever she could drag into the woods, and she enjoyed fishing as well. Gloria attended Bay City Woodside Elementary School for her early education; her family moved to Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, where she went to high school. Shortly after her high school graduation, she met Ben, and they married for life. The couple moved from Charlotte, Michigan, to Kalkaska in 1975. Sometime in the early 1980s, Gloria picked up a new hobby – genealogy. She and Ben ended up traveling all over the state of Michigan and the U.S., as well as England and Scotland, chasing family roots. Her photography and work were like a silk ribbon, tying our family history together and leaving behind a beautiful lasting legacy. To the public eye, Gloria was a Weight Watchers lecturer in Traverse City and around the Northern Michigan area in the mid-1980s and 1990s. She also helped out in the Public Relations and Regional Offices. In the late 1970s and for maybe 18 years or so, Ben and Gloria had a 4-H Leader Dog Club. The kids each took a sponsored puppy and trained it for a year for the Leader Dog for the Blind School in Rochester, Michigan. They took this group all over Northern Michigan to

schools, parades, and various events. Gloria was also a Brownie and Girl Scout Leader when we girls were little. We will miss those days as her kids when we would hear her call out in the car, "Who wants ice cream?!" Or dancing around the living room to the music on the 8-track stereo. We will even miss going over to her house on her birthday and being scared to death by the plastic spiders. Gloria will be lovingly remembered by her husband of almost 63 years Benjamin Hillard; 3 children Gary and Shawnette (Hall) Hillard, Lorraine Hillard, Kelly (Hillard) and Doug Schrag; 5 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren; sister Joyce Willis; and several wonderful nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents Nathan and Bessie Letson; sister Claudia Case; brother-in-law Gordon Case; 2 beloved nephews; and many family and friends who greeted her in heaven. A memorial service will take place at Kalkaska Funeral Home on Wednesday, May 1, 2024 at 1:00 PM. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Gloria's honor to the Alzheimer's Association, [act.alz.org](http://act.alz.org), or [donate.brightfocus.org](http://donate.brightfocus.org) to support research and care for the fight against Alzheimer's. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

The service for Gloria Hillard will be streamed on the funeral home YouTube channel, please use this link <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd5ytWq5FzfG45UOfMJwqFw>

The stream will be live approximately 20 minutes prior to the start of the service.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAY 1. 1:00 PM (ET)

Kalkaska Funeral Home  
152 S. Cedar  
Kalkaska, MI 49646  
(231) 258-3346

# Tribute Wall

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“ Aunt Glory and I always had a special relationship, which was enhanced by our mutual love of genealogy. She loved the search, especially on her mother's side, while I usually focused on her father's side. We shared one genealogy trip together and had a wonderful time making memories. I was so jealous when she and Uncle Ben got to travel to the UK in search of our ancients, but am so happy they realized that dream together. Aunt Glory maintains a special place in my heart. I love her and feel blessed to know that someday we will meet again, and all of our shared questions will be answered. Rest easy, dear one, until that time comes. Love,  
Sharleen

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**Sharleen Espedal** - April 18, 2024 at 07:13 PM

BY

“ Oh my goodness .I have so many many great memories of Gloria..we were best friends in high school.and spent hours and hours of memorable times.she was the sweetest girl ever and a devout christian.i loved

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**Bonnie johnson young** - April 14, 2024 at 12:54 PM