



Gretchen Ann Tompkins

January 16, 1934 - September 15, 2025

On Monday, September 15, 2025, Gretchen Tompkins, age 91, passed peacefully at home surrounded by family. She was born Gretchen A Olmsted, on January 16, 1934, in Coldwater, MI, daughter of an educator, Margaret Milnes Olmsted and orthopaedic surgeon, Dr. Kenneth Olmsted. Growing up, she and her siblings, Louise, Mary and Tom enjoyed the Little Comfort cottage and beach at Coldwater Lake as well as the large family home on Hanchett Street in town.

Gretchen played the saxophone and excelled as a drum majorette in the marching band. She played the piano her whole life and brought music to her classrooms. She always knew she was going to be a schoolteacher.

At Northern Michigan College (NMU), she met and fell in love with Budd Tompkins. Budd and football took her from Marquette to Big Bay to Coldwater, Frankenmuth, and eventually Traverse City. Gretch taught early elementary in Negaunee, Big Bay, Coldwater and Bridgeport. She was a football coach's wife who understood priorities as the seasons changed. In the classroom, she was devoted to teaching children to read.

She raised and supported her family, Lisa, Jenny and Paul. She always loved her dogs. Gretchen was a force of nature. We were all made better by her watch over us.

Gretchen leaves behind Lisa Gorence and her husband Ken Johnson, Jennifer and husband Bertrand Rigaldies, and Paul Tompkins, grandchildren Kyle Gorence, Kelsey Worsham, Emily Worsham, and family. She is survived

by her sister Louise Fry and brother-in-law Dr. Gene Fry DDS, many beautiful nieces and nephews, a host of football-player "sons" and countless dear friends.

A memorial service will be held at Kalkaska Funeral Home, on Saturday, October 18th, 2025. Visitation will begin at 10AM, followed by the service at 11AM. Donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or ASPCA. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 18. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Kalkaska Funeral Home
152 S Cedar St
P.O. Box 1457
Kalkaska, MI 49646

Memorial Service

OCT 18. 11:00 AM (ET)

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P.O. Box 1457
Kalkaska, MI 49646

Tribute Wall

GF

“Gorence Family purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Gretchen Ann Tompkins.



Gorence Family - October 15, 2025 at 02:30 PM

GF

“Gorence Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Gretchen Ann Tompkins.

Gorence Family - October 15, 2025 at 02:30 PM

DH

“Dear Lisa and the Tompkins family, my sympathy to all of you. I don't recall ever meeting your Mom, but my friend Sandy B tells me such wonderful things about her fellow Kindergarten teacher.

Dan Haubenstricker - September 22, 2025 at 06:58 PM

MW

“Lisa and Jenny, when you lived in Frankenmuth on Kern St, we lived next door Mary and Ken Worley Jenny you used to come to my house after kindergarten, and I would watch you until your mom would pick you up after school. You were so special and so happy. Ken and I played cards every week end had so much fun. Your Dad was a great coach and very respected. Your family was truly missed on Kern Street. Sending a hug to your family 🤗

mary worley - September 22, 2025 at 05:48 PM

SA

“ Condolences to the Tompkins family. Lisa, I don't think I ever met your mother, but I share with you the loss of a mother. A very difficult life event that many of our classmates are experiencing lately. May God hold each of us in His loving arms.

Susan Zehnder Acord - September 20, 2025 at 08:22 PM

SG

“ God gave you many years of memories with your mom, Lisa. Prayers to help comfort until you meet again.

Sarah J Gedraitis - September 20, 2025 at 04:57 PM

BS

“ So very sorry for your loss. I always enjoyed my time with her. God bless you and give you peace & comfort.
Barbara Shearer

Barbara Shearer - September 20, 2025 at 04:46 PM