



Susan Marion McCarthy

July 14, 1945 - May 9, 2026

Susan Marion McCarthy went to her eternal home on Saturday, May 9, 2026, surrounded by the love of her family.

Susie was born on July 14, 1945, in Berlin to Menroy and Sally Franzen. From the very beginning, Susie brought warmth, laughter, and a little sparkle wherever she went. As a young girl, she could often be found trailing behind her older brother, Buck, as he stirred up mischief around town.

A proud member of the Berlin High School Class of 1963, Susie was as kind as she was popular, earning the title of Miss Berlin. More importantly, she built lifelong friendships that she treasured deeply. Whether golfing, sharing long lunches, or “going juking” with friends, Susie had a gift for making every outing memorable and every person feel special.

After high school, Susie attended the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse, where she studied Secondary Education. Following graduation, she moved to Florida, where fate introduced her to the love of her life — a handsome boat captain named Tom McCarthy. Tom and Susie were married on the beach in Maine on July 2, 1968, beginning a love story filled with love and laughter. While living in Florida, they welcomed their two sons, Danny and Tommy, before returning home to Berlin in 1975.

Back in Berlin, Susie devoted her life to caring for others. She worked as a

certified nursing assistant and home health aide before joining the Berlin Area School District as a library assistant and special education aide. She had an extraordinary ability to connect with children, especially those who needed a little extra patience, encouragement, or joy. With her goofy sense of humor, endless compassion, and playful spirit, Susie made learning fun and made people feel seen.

In 2005, Susie joyfully accepted what she considered her greatest title: Grandma. Before long, she became known simply as “Grandma Susie” — not only to her grandchildren, but to just about everyone lucky enough to know her. She loved cheering from the sidelines of the course, court, track, or auditorium and she never missed a chance to proudly share even the smallest accomplishment of her grandchildren. She also took great pleasure in humbling them at cribbage and happily taking their money whenever she could.

Susie will be remembered for her contagious laugh, her loving heart, her quick wit, and her remarkable ability to make people feel welcomed and loved. She leaves behind a family and community made better simply because she was part of it.

Grandma Susie was preceded in death by her parents, Menroy and Sally Franzen; her brother, Buck Franzen; and her beloved husband, Tom McCarthy.

She is survived by her brother, Roy (Jane) Franzen; her children, Danny (Amy Plato) McCarthy and Tommy (Carrie) McCarthy; her cherished grandchildren, Anna, Thomas, and Charlie; her sister-in-law, Patti Franzen; and her nieces and nephews, Amy Franzen, Mark (Emi) Franzen, Amanda Franzen, and Jake (Nicole Marklein) Franzen.

A celebration of Susie’s life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers,

memorial donations may be made to the Berlin High School Senior Scholarship Fund.