



## Kate (Apley) Swails

March 9, 1947 - March 1, 2024

A Memorial Service for Kate was held on Friday, March 15, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Geneva. Kim Dunker presided over the Memorial Service.

A Graveside Committal of Ashes was held in the Geneva Public Cemetery immediately following the Memorial Service.

Memorials are suggested to the City Of Hope Cancer Research Fund in memory of Kate Swails. You can leave a donation online at <https://www.cityofhope.org/giving>

Kathryn Ann (Kate) Apley Swails was born as the first child of Don and Irene Apley on March 9, 1947 and joined her Heavenly Father on March 1, 2024 at her home in Laguna Niguel, California at the age of 76 years, 11 months, and 23 days.

Kate lived with her parents and three siblings in Geneva, Nebraska until she graduated from Geneva High School in 1965. She then moved to Lincoln to attend the University of Nebraska.

She married Leon Swails, the love of her life, the following Fall. Last October, Leon & Kate celebrated their 58th Wedding Anniversary.

Unexpectedly, Leon received his Draft Notice just two weeks after they were married and he left for basic training shortly afterward. Because of the uncertainty of the Vietnam War and where he would be stationed, Kate followed him to Advanced Infantry Training in Fort Ord, California, and then on to West Germany where he served for almost two years in the Infantry before being discharged. While in Europe, both Kate and Leon developed a love for travel and driving an old 1958 Opel car. They visited 14 European countries and have since visited 6 continents.

Upon returning from Europe in 1968, Kate gave birth to their first child, Lisa LeAndra. Kate stayed home to care for their newborn while Leon attended the University of Nebraska on the GI Bill. They supported themselves with babysitting (for Kate) and as a part-time framing carpenter (for Leon).

Two and a half years later, in 1971, during the week, Leon graduated from the University and the couple welcomed their second daughter, Heather Joleen, into the world. Leon took a job with Oscar Mayer Meat Packers in Davenport, Iowa where they relocated with a two year old and an infant daughter. After two years in Iowa, they came back to Lincoln in 1973 and began a fifty plus year career in Real Estate. Over the next decades they were relocated to Denver for a few years, Scottsdale, Arizona for a couple more and then ultimately to Orange County, California in 1987 where they still live in the same home they built when they arrived 37 years ago.

Kate had a passion for life that started as a young girl and continued through the balance of her life. As a 13-year old student in Geneva Public Schools, she excelled at her studies and graduated as the Valedictorian of the Class of 1965. In addition, she was very active in the Congregational Church and was also active in just about everything in school, including Student Council, Class President, Band, Glee Club, Class Plays, Yearbook Editor and on and on.

The passion Kate had for life continued for the almost 59 years after graduation. She took excellent care of both her spiritual life as well as her physical well-being. Just before being diagnosed with Stage 4 breast cancer almost 9 years ago, Kate could actually bench press her own weight as a result of working out 4 times a week. She was always looking out for those in need and supported many charities for the needy. In early 2000, she and Leon adopted a small school with 150 Kindergarten through sixth graders in Hanover, Jamaica in a very poor rural area of the country where they made many trips to visit and provide support. Kate also worked a full day a week as a volunteer for a local homeless shelter and food outreach for many years. She studied Religion at Azusa Pacific University, but she was never able to fulfill a lifelong dream of being an ordained minister. She did serve as a Stephen Minister in her home Presbyterian Church doing work as the leader of lay pastors there.

Kate had an incredible passion for and love of family. Happily, all of her children and 8 grandchildren lived relatively close which allowed for lots of visits. Every other November the entire family enjoyed a vacation to some international location. Kate loved the planning that went into these trips and the times she got to spend in uninterrupted time together with their 2 daughters, sons-in-laws and grandchildren.

Kate was beautiful both inside and out and people who knew her loved her. She will be missed by many.

Kate was preceded in death by her parents; grandson Adam Jacob Stevenson who she has now joined in Heaven; and brother Tim Apley.

Kate is survived by her husband Leon Swails of Laguna Niguel, California;

daughters Heather (Mark) Stevenson of Corona, California and Lisa (Steve) Serra of Gilbert, Arizona; eight living grandchildren: Carsten (Katelyn), Alec, Griffin (Hannah), Xana, Clarissa, and Karis Serra, all of whom live in Arizona and Caleb and Anna-Noel Stevenson who live in Southern California. Anna is the namesake of Kate and Leon. Ann is Kate's middle name and Noel spelled backwards is Leon. Kate is also survived by one great granddaughter Adeline; brother Don Apley & wife Pam of Lincoln, Nebraska; sister Brenda Whelan of Denver, Colorado; brother-in-law LeRoy Swails of Ten Mile, Tennessee; and nine nieces and nephews.

# Cemetery Details

## Geneva Public Cemetery

Geneva, NE 68361

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAR 15. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
906 H Street  
Geneva, NE 68361

## Graveside Service

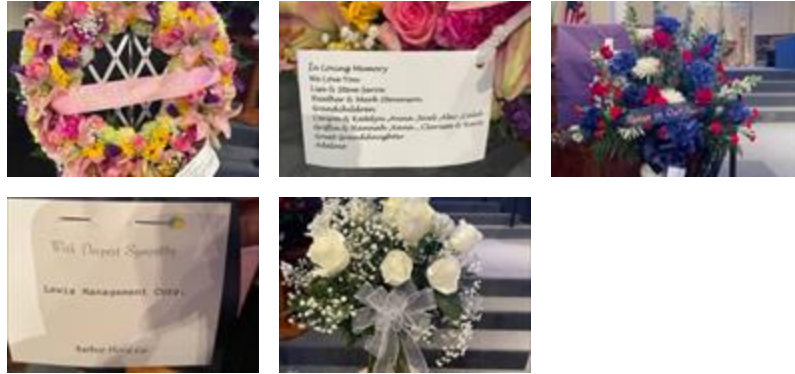
MAR 15 (CT)

Geneva Public Cemetery  
Geneva, NE 68361

# Tribute Wall



“ 31 files added to the album Flower Pictures



Farmer & Son Funeral Home - March 15, 2024 at 12:33 PM

BS

“ As a little girl I always looked up to “Kathy” ❤️ Our grandma always said I was “Kathy’s shadow” ❤️ I probably was a little bit of a pest but she never let me know ☐ I loved spending time with her. 😊 As the years went by I apologized for always forgetting to call her Kate but she said that it was ok. I could still call her Kathy if she could still call me Barbie. lol!!! Another memory was Kathy always called my mom( her aunt Beth) every day around 3:30. Mom looked forward to that so much! A beautiful lady inside and out!!!

Barbara Schoenholz - March 14, 2024 at 09:01 AM

LG

“ Love Always, Shelley and Buster Griffin planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kate (Apley) Swails.

Love Always, Shelley and Buster Griffin - March 14, 2024 at 04:30 AM

LG

“ Love Always, Shelley and Buster Griffin purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Kate (Apley) Swails.



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**Love Always, Shelley and Buster Griffin** - March 14, 2024 at 04:30 AM

MS

“ Mary Ellen Stephens planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kate (Apley) Swails.

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**Mary Ellen Stephens** - March 13, 2024 at 10:50 AM

MS

“ Mary Ellen Stephens purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of Kate (Apley) Swails.



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**Mary Ellen Stephens** - March 13, 2024 at 10:50 AM

CD

“ Cousin Susie DeLacy purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Kate (Apley) Swails.



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**Cousin Susie DeLacy** - March 11, 2024 at 01:41 PM

SD

“ My sympathies to Kate's family. Kate was one of 26 first cousins from the adult children of Adolph & Clara Lechtenberger, of Geneva, NE. Most of our cousins attended Geneva High School. I have wonderful memories of times spent with cousin Kate when we were children. Her favorite song then was "Chantilly Lace." She often commented on how handsome our male cousins were (true!). We had fun together with sleepovers, playgrounds, visiting aunts, uncles & our grandparents, birthday celebrations, playing cards, time at the Geneva swimming pool, movies, Lechtenberger family gatherings at the Log House in the Geneva City Park, & at our grandparents & relative's homes, etc. Due to geographic separation we didn't see much of each other as adults, but I always enjoyed our visits. She was an amazing person & a fine cousin.

Sondra Dunkle - March 08, 2024 at 09:24 PM

LG

“ Lisa, Tony, Allison & Lindsay Griesmer purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Kate (Apley) Swails.



Lisa, Tony, Allison & Lindsay Griesmer - March 07, 2024 at 11:11 AM

YH

“ Your friend , Rosalinda Hernandez purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Kate (Apley) Swails.



Your friend , Rosalinda Hernandez - March 06, 2024 at 07:06 PM

PK

“ *Patty Kline lit a candle in memory of Kate Swails*



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**Patty Steider Kline** - March 06, 2024 at 11:15 AM

LC

“ *Lewis Management Corp. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kate (Apley) Swails.*

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**Lewis Management Corp.** - March 05, 2024 at 02:02 PM



“ *With Distinction was purchased for the family of Kate (Apley) Swails.*



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March 05, 2024 at 02:02 PM

VJ

“ *Virginia Johnson lit a candle in memory of Kate Swails*



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**Virginia Johnson** - March 05, 2024 at 01:15 PM

MN

“ To Leon and family, Kate was a great classmate and friend she will be missed by all. Gods Blessings to you all.

*Your classmate Madolene Blanke Neubauer.*

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**madolene Neubauer** - March 05, 2024 at 12:20 PM