



Debra "Deb" Toepke

January 1, 1955 - December 12, 2019

Debra "Deb" Toepke, age 64, passed away on Thursday, December 12, 2019 at her home in Glendive. Memorial services will be held at 10:00 A.M. on Friday, December 20, 2019 at Zion Lutheran Church with Pastor Brenda Frelsi officiating. Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements.

Deb was born on January 1, 1955 in Glendive, the daughter of Ralph and Evelyn (Heitz) Schaffel. She was raised and educated in Glendive, graduating from Dawson County High School with the class of 1973. After her high school graduation she started work at HKT Big Sky Motors, where she was still employed at the time of her death. She did many jobs at HKT, mostly with book work, taxes, and year end business. She also furthered her education by taking night classes at Dawson Community College where she received her Associate of Arts Degree in 1991. She was later united in marriage to Wes Toepke on July 31, 1994 at Happy Hollow near Glendive.

Above all though, Deb was a caregiver. She was always there with a helping hand for those in need and she genuinely enjoyed just helping people. Deb was a true believer in Glendive, and had served on numerous committees and boards including: Grandview Board of Directors, Glendive Rotary Club (of which she was a past president), Glendive Community Cancer Fund, Greater Glendive Community Foundation, Dawson County Urban Transportation Board, Glendive Medical Center Hospice Volunteer, Women Who Wine, Beta Sigma Phi, and she was also instrumental in spearheading the Glendive Splash

Park.

In the words of Deb's dear friend Peggy Iba:

"We lost a friend, compassionate helper, community champion and philanthropist when Deb Toepke died. She was an out of the limelight gal. She trimmed trees in parks and boulevards and burned the evidence in her backyard firepit. She put up funds to encourage groups to clean up Glendive during earth week. She spearheaded the splash park. From the first meeting at the library to gauge interest, it was less than a year before it was done, jumpstarted with husband Wes's memorial money. It was awesome to see young moms champion the cause. She liked making things better, like the underpass or making things more efficient, especially if it involved Dewalt tools. She could have had her own HGTV home improvement show, repurposing castaways into playhouses and yard art. After taking care of Wes through diabetes and dialysis, she learned the medical ropes and took compassionate responsibility for helping people during their last months. She and Wes set up a donor designated fund through the fledging Glendive community foundation to help baseball and softball annually, but also to show support for community foundations. The Toepke philanthropy is legendary. But mostly I will miss the person, a partner in crime."

She was preceded in death by her parents, Ralph and Evelyn; and her husband Wes.

Deb is survived by her son, Eric Knudson of Glendive; one brother, Jim (Louise) Schaffel of Billings, Montana; two nieces, Lisa (Ben) Ballew of Billings and their children Cooper and Colby, and Stephanie Schaffel of Seattle, Washington; three grandchildren, Mikal, Kendel, and Kennedi Wilkerson; and all of Wes' family and extended family.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in Deb's name are suggested to any cause that benefits Glendive.

Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silhafuneralhomes.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC **20**. 10:00 AM (MT)

Zion Lutheran Church
401 Riverview Avenue
Glendive, MT 59330

Tribute Wall



“ *Debra "Deb" Toepke*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM



“ *Eric,
Sorry to learn about your mother's passing. I hope you are well.
-Del Siegle*

Del Siegle - January 04, 2020 at 02:38 PM

JB

“ I have always considered Debra my best friend during our high school years. A lot of time was spent by me at the Schaffels', the gray house on the corner of Maple Avenue in Hillcrest. My house was 4 houses down the street. I always connect triscuits, orange juice and vodka with Debra. At one point Deb and I used to ride a motorcycle through the darkened streets of the south side of Glendive and sing while riding. During the time that Deb was dating Dan Ruddy, she would have date night with him one night and one night he would entertain us both by 'Dragging' main street in Glendive in Dan's Dodge Charger, drinking Strawberry Hill wine and listening to the Grassroots Greatest Hits on the 8 track. Sometimes I would go with Deb and her mom to her grandma's house on the southside for toast and coffee. I have fond memories of Deb's brother Jim harassing us both in his teasing ways. I would accompany Deb and her mom to Billings to buy school clothes. Debbie was always a walker and we would walk a lot from one end of Glendive to the other, talking and looking to the sky. Deb was the one that first introduced me to the Big Dipper and other star constellations. The last time I was in Glendive in 2008, we took a walk. It was always a challenge to keep up with those long legs of hers. Each summer Deb wanted to sunbathe. I would sunbathe with her although while she turned a nice brown, I would just burn, freckle and turn white again. Through the years since high school, we would keep in contact by phone or see each other when I would make my way to Glendive or Deb would be in Western Montana. She was always good about calling me on my birthday, which she did this past Dec.3. I missed her call and ended up texting her and got a reply a few days before she passed. As the days pass since her death, I am feeling more and more sad about her death It was too soon. Her son Eric put it in perspective by writing that she is now with Wes as well as her mom and dad and grandma.that gives me a little comfort.

Jeanette 'Jenny' Sullivan Bloom - December 28, 2019 at 11:38 AM

HC

“ *Debbie was my very first best friend when we were little kids growing up on the south side. Digging holes in the back yard, playing in the playhouse, waging war on the boys on the block with tomatoes, learning to ride our bikes, helping her Grandma Heitz make struedel, so many memories. So very sorry to learn that she's gone.*

Holli Bell Christensen

Holli Christensen - December 24, 2019 at 12:59 AM

JH

“ *Prayers for the family.*



Jack Hanson - December 22, 2019 at 04:53 PM

DP

“ *I graduated with Deb, I am so sorry to hear of her passing! Thoughts and prayers to all of her family and friends!!*

Deb Erhardt Pendley

Debbie Pendley - December 21, 2019 at 05:48 PM

PL

“ Pam Lewis lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Pam Lewis - December 21, 2019 at 02:51 PM

PH

“ Patricia Hochhalter lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Patricia Hochhalter - December 20, 2019 at 04:16 PM

JL

“ Janette Legato lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Janette Legato - December 19, 2019 at 04:58 PM

SC

“ Sherry And Arvid Corneliusen lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Sherry and Arvid Corneliusen - December 19, 2019 at 10:17 AM



“ Jane Jarvis lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



jane jarvis - December 19, 2019 at 09:34 AM



“ Sheryl Walsh lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Sheryl Walsh - December 18, 2019 at 06:23 PM



“ 58 files added to the album LifeTributes



Silha Funeral Home - December 18, 2019 at 01:50 PM

RA

“ *Deb was always fun to talk to. She was so smart, observant and caring about this town on many levels. I'll miss the conversation.*

Rose Marie Aus

Rose Marie Aus - December 17, 2019 at 11:34 PM

DK

“ *Don & LaVonne Kautzmann lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Don & LaVonne Kautzmann - December 17, 2019 at 07:46 PM

MB

“ *Marie Barthel lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Marie Barthel - December 17, 2019 at 04:47 PM

JG

“ *Jerry Geiger lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Jerry Geiger - December 17, 2019 at 09:33 AM

LA

“ *LaNetteSimonton lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



LaNetteSimonton - December 17, 2019 at 12:36 AM

KW

“ *Kathy And Terry Woodyard lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Kathy and Terry Woodyard - December 16, 2019 at 11:34 PM


Hannah
Wilson

“ *One of the handiest women I've ever known. She taught me how to use multiple different tools, how to properly clean tile floors and make beds, "prune"(her favorite chore) trees and hedges, and start a big fire to get rid of all our branches. She was a great listener and had a big heart! I will forever cherish my time spent with her. She will be missed.*

Hannah Wilson - December 16, 2019 at 11:25 PM

KS

“ *Kylie Smith lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



kylie smith - December 16, 2019 at 11:20 PM

AA

“ *Ann Aldinger lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Ann Aldinger - December 16, 2019 at 10:01 PM

NS

“ *Norma Shearer lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



norma shearer - December 16, 2019 at 09:23 PM

JC

“ *Jack And Diane Crockett lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Jack and Diane Crockett - December 16, 2019 at 07:05 PM

AF

“ *Amy Frank-Casini lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Amy Frank-Casini - December 16, 2019 at 12:25 PM

SN

“ *God bless your family...*



Sue Mosser...Aspen Nurse - December 16, 2019 at 11:07 AM

CD

“ *Carole J. Diede lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Carole J. Diede - December 16, 2019 at 10:55 AM

AB

“ *Alice Bachmeier lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



alice bachmeier - December 15, 2019 at 11:40 PM

 Gina Mann

“ *Gina Mann lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Gina Mann - December 15, 2019 at 06:28 PM

TL

“ Terry & Cathy Lobdell lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Terry & Cathy Lobdell - December 15, 2019 at 05:47 PM

AG

“ Arlene Gieser lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Arlene Gieser - December 15, 2019 at 04:59 PM

DB

“ Our condolences go out to Debra Toepke's family and friends. She will be greatly missed.



Denise Borotrager - December 15, 2019 at 02:33 AM

KP

“ Krista Newton Page lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Krista Newton Page - December 14, 2019 at 11:22 PM

DZ

“ Don And Penny Zimmerman lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Don and Penny Zimmerman - December 14, 2019 at 10:55 PM

SW

“ Sheryl Walsh lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Sheryl Walsh - December 14, 2019 at 10:36 PM

MK

“ Mary Kutzler lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Mary Kutzler - December 14, 2019 at 08:10 PM

EL

“ Deb was so remarkably giving. My deepest sympathy to Eric and Jim's families. My prayers of comfort are with all of you. Eula And Ashley Langton



Eula Langton - December 14, 2019 at 06:55 PM

BB

“ Bonnie Broeder sent a virtual gift in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Bonnie Broeder - December 14, 2019 at 03:34 PM

CK

“ Cathy And Gary Kirkpatrick lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Cathy and Gary Kirkpatrick - December 14, 2019 at 02:03 PM

KS

“ Karen Schock lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Karen Schock - December 14, 2019 at 10:47 AM

BT

“ Becky Tipton lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Becky Tipton - December 14, 2019 at 10:45 AM

JR

“ John And Kim Rahr lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



John and Kim Rahr - December 14, 2019 at 10:44 AM

SB

“ Sharon Bain lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Sharon Bain - December 14, 2019 at 09:07 AM

LH

“ Beautiful and giving person. Rest in peace Deb. Condolences to her family.



Lory Heltemes - December 14, 2019 at 07:46 AM

LF

“ Linda Frank lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Linda Frank - December 14, 2019 at 01:46 AM

RP

“ So sorry to hear about Deb! Sending thoughts and Prayers! Randi Jo Haugen-Pieper

Randi Jo Pieper - December 13, 2019 at 08:17 PM

MH

“ Marvin And Sue Howe lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Marvin and Sue Howe - December 13, 2019 at 07:37 PM

LM

“ Our Heart breaks for Jim, Eric, family and friends! In Our Prayers of Peace and Comfort! Larry and Kathi Melton

Larry Melton - December 13, 2019 at 07:08 PM

TH

“ Tracey Hughes-Sand lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke



Tracey Hughes-Sand - December 13, 2019 at 05:36 PM

DD

“ *Jim, Eric and family,*

Wishing you peace to bring comfort, courage to face the days ahead and loving memories to forever hold in your hearts

Dan and Donna Dobson

Dan and Donna Dobson - December 13, 2019 at 05:18 PM

DS

“ *Dick Sadorf lit a candle in memory of Debra "Deb" Toepke*



Dick Sadorf - December 13, 2019 at 05:09 PM