



Kathleen Louise Welter

October 4, 1942 - March 31, 2026

Kathleen Louise Burkey Welter, 83, of Rexburg, Idaho, died peacefully at home on March 31, 2026.

Kathy was born October 4, 1942 in Monroe, Michigan to Norman and Hildegarde Burkey. The second youngest of five children, she grew up in Michigan and attended Saint Mary Academy and then the Mercy School of Nursing in Toledo Ohio, where she became a Registered Nurse.

Growing up in Monroe, Kathy's parents had a large garden and many domesticated animals to care for, she learned many practical life skills in her young life helping to tend the garden as well as the ducks, geese, chickens, turkeys, rabbits and of course, a family dog. One of her favorite memories was the delight of caring for a baby fox that she adored.

Throughout her life, Kathy had a deep affinity for animals of any kind, she was not content if she didn't have pet to love. Her family often spent hunting season and occasional weekends traveling up to the family cabin in the north of Michigan, this time shaped Kathy's love of the outdoors and her lifelong passion for and elation in observing any animal in the wild.

Kathy always wished to help any injured or struggling thing, animal or human. After graduating high school, that same desire to help would lead her to train

and become a nurse. She chose to work in the emergency room and as a delivery room nurse, she often spoke with fondness of her time helping the mothers with their new babies, especially those babies!

During her time at nursing school, Kathy attended a friend's party in Toledo, Ohio, where she met the love of her life, Tom Welter. After a brief courtship, they were married on October 3, 1964.

A year later, they gladly welcomed their first child, a son. Kathy loved being a mother and hoped to have many more children, but unforeseen changes with her health wouldn't allow her to have this particular wish of her heart.

In February 1970, both she and Tom were beyond thrilled to finally be able to adopt and add a daughter to their family.

Kathy loved helping her children learn and grow, education was very important to her. As a young mother, she spent time cutting pictures from magazines to make little books to teach them reading and when they were older, played games like scrabble with them to build vocabulary. Both she and Tom taught them the value of experiencing history first hand by taking their family to historic monuments and national parks as much as their budget would allow.

Kathy loved to travel, exploring new places, and experiencing for herself the landscape and history of a place was a lifelong passion. Many favorite family stories come from camping across the U.S. and Canada with a station wagon and a big tent purchased from Sears. When the family moved to Wyoming, they purchased a pick up and camper and explored the mountains and nearby Yellowstone park. After moving to Utah, they purchased one of Kathy's favorite possessions, a 16 ft R.V., this served them well, especially when they moved to the Oregon coast. In their over 61 year marriage, Tom and Kathy traveled and explored as long and their health and abilities would allow.

Kathy was a faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and in her later years, she truly enjoyed serving in her church and community as a service committee member responsible for Humanitarian Aid projects under the direction of the women's Relief Society. Gathering resources to help children in need was particularly meaningful to her.

Kathy is survived by her children: son Jeff Welter, daughter Jackie Gratton, and grand daughter Devyn Fernelius, and their spouses, respectively, Tina M. Welter, David Gratton, and Ben Fernelius; also by her brother Vincent.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Tom Welter, her parents, and siblings, Norman Jr., Kenneth, and Elaine.

Kathy and Tom both felt a deep attachment to the Oregon coast and thoroughly loved the twenty eight years they lived there.

The family will be honoring their wishes to return them there for burial. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, please make a donation to charity in Kathy's honor.

Cemetery Details

Bateman Chelan Abbey Mausoleum

915 NE Yaquina Heights Drive
Newport, OR 97365