

# Karen Spiker

**East Alton | Thursday, November 19 2015**

Karen A. Spiker, 58, died on November 19, 2015 at 10:20 p.m.

Karen's family received the best gift ever, Christmas Day 1956, when we were blessed with the birth of Karen.

Karen was a student in the Alton School System K-12, graduating a year ahead of her classmates in 1974. She graduated from Belleville Barber College in 1980. Karen found her true calling in life-working with the elderly. She was a lifelong advocate of "her little peoples" as she called the residents of Eldercare of the Valley & Stonebridge, where she worked for 25 years. She had a heart as big as Texas when it came to helping the residents, from buying clothes, slippers, socks or special treats out of her own pocket, to staying after work to visit with those who had no visitors. She loved watching butterflies in her yard, talking to the cardinals, befriending does and fawns at the wood's edge at her workplace and picking up stray dogs and cats she'd see while commuting to and from work. Karen was loved by all who met her for her compassion, quick wit, and finding humor in situations where no one else could, bringing a smile to the faces of everyone present. She'd always make everyone around her laugh, so there was never a dull moment when Karen was in the room. She was also "Mom" to the "girls" she worked with, who came to her for her wise, down-to-earth advice.



Karen demonstrated her love for the elderly by residing with her father, Bill, for many years to care for him as he battled dementia and Alzheimer's. She also made her daily phone calls and visits to her mother, June, making sure her needs were met such as taking her to doctor visits, preparing meals then bringing her to Karen's house and back home, so she'd know Mom was eating properly, and taking Mom shopping weekly so she could monitor her diet.

Karen was diagnosed with lung cancer Nov. 3, 2014 and had lung surgery Feb. 11, 2015, followed by chemo and radiation at Mercy Hospital, where she fell in love with her oncologist, Dr. Finnie and her radiologist, Dr. Frazier. Although sick her compassion and quick wit never eluded her as she encountered a new group of friends there. Karen was given a clean bill of health in Sept., 2015 after a body scan revealed she was cancer free. Only 2 weeks later, after suffering headaches, a CT scan showed brain metastasis. She endured more radiation treatments, but her body couldn't withstand any more chemo. Karen fought heroically to the end, always saying "It's in God's hands". And now she is.

Karen's family would like to deeply thank her coworkers at The Valley. Karen's request to her sister, Vickie, was "Sissy, I want to go to Ms. Marguerite and Ms. Pam." So Karen was reunited with her former coworker "family" at The Valley, where everyone lovingly cared for her under the direction of Marguerite Treadwell and Pam Boyd in the final days.

Karen leaves to mourn her passing her mother, June Spiker, her brother, David (Cheryl) Wilson and their children J.D. (Heather) Wilson, Valerie (Bob) Behrends, all of the Alton area; her sister, Vickie (M. Steve) Elledge and their children Stacie (Mike) Lampo, Mark Elledge III, and Michael (Laura) Elledge, all of Texas; 10 great nieces and 4 great nephews; her companion of 23 years, Ray Greer and his 3 children, Michael, Tiffany and Amanda and their 5 children; and her lifelong girlfriends Betty-Jane Gentry (Byers) and Barb Street (Weber). She also leaves her "baby" of 20 years, Romeo, her dog.

Karen was preceded in death by her father, William "Bill" Spiker; nephew, Mark Elledge, Jr.; maternal grandparents J. Athel and Irene Reeder; paternal grandparents Martin and Johanna Spiker. According to her specific wishes, she will be cremated with private interment.

Karen specified that her friends and family were to gather, laugh and reminisce with happy/funny stories of her. So to honor this wish, a gathering will be held at Abundant Life Community Church, 3986 Humbert Road, Alton on Friday, Nov. 27 from 2-4 p. m. All are invited to share photos and stories of their interactions with Karen. Cake and coffee will be served.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to your local animal shelter or senior citizens organization in memory of Karen.

Online guestbook available at [www.paynicfh.com](http://www.paynicfh.com)