



## Katherine Ann Kunkel

March 8, 1926 - April 12, 2021

Katherine Ann Duane Kunkel (March 8, 1926 - April 12, 2021)

Born in Seattle, WA, to John Aloysius and Katherine Magdalena (Hoepfner) Duane, Katherine was the second of five children, and the apple of her father's eye. Her only sister was born three months after her father's untimely death, when Katherine was only ten years old. The survival of her family during those Depression years was due in large part to the support of the close-knit community of St. Therese Parish in Seattle's Madrona district. Katherine was a tomboy as a child, and known as the fastest runner in the neighborhood, and one of the first-picked for baseball games. She excelled at basketball, loved swimming, and had a lifelong love of all sports. Katherine was so precocious she skipped first grade, but ever after always felt as if she was struggling to keep up. She got excellent grades but did not enjoy school. She also confided that when she was about 10, she liked to sneak out on Tuesday nights to the movies, because they were only a dime! She was a gifted lyric soprano, and sang solo from an early age.

Katherine Kunkel lived her faith deeply and enthusiastically. After graduation from Holy Names Academy in 1943 at age 17, she entered the nearby Carmelite monastery, and was a cloistered nun for three years. At age 20, she left the convent and moved to Wenatchee, working as a nurse's aide at Julia Brenner's home, which later became Highline Convalescent Center. God had a different plan for her: she met and married Leo Kunkel on April 23, 1949, and had nine children!

She was an accomplished woman, the quintessential wife, mother and homemaker. She baked 6 loaves of fresh bread weekly, and her cinnamon rolls and fruit pies were legendary. Other foods we loved were her Topsy Turvy peach cobbler and the Pink Stuff, a jello salad with her beloved cottage cheese.

Every summer she canned hundreds of quarts of peaches, pears, apricots and cherries from the family orchard, and she also sewed 21 white shirts for her seven sons to wear as part of their school uniform for the coming year. She painted the interior of our home, ceilings, cabinets, intricate moldings and all, nearly every other year, and one summer she even stripped and painted a big upright piano. She crocheted afghans for all her children and grandchildren. She made hand-sewn lined altar cloths out of beautiful gold and silver brocades and satins: ciborium covers and chalice veils, as she learned in the convent.

Mom also kept the books for Kunkel's Welding Service and helped run the family orchard. She wrote countless letters to her four sons in the seminary and to all of her grown children away from home, always thinking of her kids. Katherine would ring her cowbell and cheer, "Go, go, Wenatchee!! Go, go!!" till she was hoarse, at her children's sporting events, especially hockey games and swim meets, and she still enjoyed getting out to see her great-grandson's T-ball games in the spring.

Although she was vigorously engaged at home, Katherine always found time to contribute to the community. She and Leo presided over the St. Joseph's School Parents' Club for several years - Kunkel kids attended from 1956 - 1980.

Katherine was in high demand as a soloist for weddings and funerals throughout the area. She preferred funerals to weddings because she felt she could comfort people with her voice. Katherine sang with Sweet Adelines and was active with Music Theater of Wenatchee during the 1960's, playing the understudy to Anna in *The King and I*, and to *Mother Superior* (of course!) in *The Sound of Music*, among others.

Later, she was very active with Republican Women, and was also involved in establishing the organizations currently known as Wenatchee Right to Life and Life Choices of Wenatchee Valley. In her late 80's, Katherine was a frequent volunteer for 40 Days for Life.

Katherine was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church since 1947, sang in the choir until 1981, and attended daily Mass for decades and kept her weekly Adoration Hour from 1990 until COVID-19.

She was a Third Order Franciscan for many years, then became an Oblate of Wisdom for another decade. Katherine was a Catholic Daughter for nearly 70 years, and at age 93 became a Secular Carmelite, coming full circle back to her original Carmelite roots.

Katherine took up painting in oils and acrylics at mid-life, and she created 93 beautiful landscapes and still lifes over the course of twenty years. She also took great delight in creating nearly 3500 knit hats on a loom for her church's Knit and Crochet Group and the Wenatchee Hat Project.

She traveled to Italy, Hawaii, Washington, DC, and Guatemala to visit her kids who lived there, and cruised the Inside Passage with Dad to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

Katherine enjoyed a good laugh, and at times would laugh until she couldn't stop, infecting everyone in the room as well. Of course, she married Leo, the ultimate prankster, who always had us in stitches!

Family was everything, and Katherine was the beloved matriarch of four generations. She is survived by Teresa (Mike) Drollman of Wenatchee, Joe of Malott, John (Anne) of San Diego, CA., Steve (Marile) of Wenatchee, Paul (Mirna) of Seattle, Tom (Paula) of Chelan, Andy (Diane) of East Wenatchee, and Mary Hunt (Lester Brown) of Marshfield, MO; 27 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews, and friends. Katherine was the last of her generation on both sides of our family; she was preceded in death by her parents and all her siblings; her husband of 57 years, Leo, and all his siblings; son Patrick; and great-granddaughter, Raven Drollman.

Because Leo and Katherine Kunkel loved each other, 56 people were given the gift of life.

Special thanks to Wenatchee Hospice and Angela of Visiting Angels, for your devoted care during the last weeks of Mom's life.

Funeral Rosary will be said at 12:30 PM, Thurs., April 22, 2021 at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 1 PM, followed by interment at the Wenatchee Cemetery. For those unable to attend Mom's funeral, it will be livestreamed on Facebook at "Saint Joseph Wenatchee - Live". Arrangements are by Chapel of the Valley.

Donations in Katherine's memory may be made to Wenatchee Right to Life, St. Joseph School, KC Help or St. Vincent de Paul.

Mom, we love you more than you loved us.

Because you've only loved us part of your life...

But we've loved you...all of ours.

Teresa, Joe, John, Steve, Paul, Pat, Tom, Andy and Mary

For a very special glimpse of Katherine's last 19 days of life, please visit [CaringBridge.com](https://www.caringbridge.com) and search for Katherine Kunkel

PLEASE NOTE: There will be a RECEPTION following the graveside service. Because we are still in COVID time, we regretfully limit the reception to family and close friends.

It's at Andy and Diane Kunkel's home, 2260 8th Street SE, East Wenatchee, WA.

Masks will be worn and social distancing will be observed.

Arrangements by Chapel of the Valley, East Wenatchee

# Tribute Wall

AO

“ I remember Katherine, and attended school with some of the boys. I loved the opportunities when I was able to sing with her, Lydia and Mr. Sands- so many loving memories of her, Leo and the family. My heart always hurt for her when Pat took his life. She was a lovely woman whom I have never forgotten. I am glad that I was able to watch her funeral ( today) . Thank you for sharing her life, spirit and love. Ann Bright O'Keeffe

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**Ann O'Keeffe** - July 05, 2022 at 12:02 AM

CH

“ I have fond memories of Mrs. Kunkel when she would attend our hockey games (I don't think she ever missed one) . I played on teams with Steve, Tom and Andy over the many years. Every time we would score she would, very loudly ring her large cow bell and yell just as loud!  
I am so sorry to learn of her passing. My thoughts and prayer are with the Kunkel family.

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**Chuck Holland** - April 28, 2021 at 11:21 AM

JA

“ May our Lord comfort you w/the promise of seeing our beloved, Katherine, again in Heaven. Thank you, Katherine for your wonderful friendship for 31 years, your devotion to our Lord, and beautiful voice that blessed so many! You are so missed!

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**jameslholcomb@yahoo.com** - April 23, 2021 at 09:22 PM

GG

“ *Our thoughts and Prayers go out to all of the Kunkel family at this time. Aunt Katherine's journey is finally over and may she always rest in peace. We will always remember her and our family trips to Wenatchee and the fun times shared by all. We will not be able to attend the services but are with you in hearts and sprit.*

*The Goertz Family; Jerry, Dawn, Megan, Bob and Cheryl*

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**Gerald Goertz** - April 16, 2021 at 11:19 AM