



## Mary Beth Hunt

July 19, 1956 - September 5, 2020

Mary Beth Dittmer Hunt, died at the Mayo Clinic Hospital - Rochester, Methodist Campus, on Saturday, September 5, 2020. She was the oldest daughter of Neil and Helen Raders Dittmer. She was born on Thursday, July 19, 1956 in Davenport, Iowa. When she was one, her father graduated from St. Ambrose College and moved the young family to Southern California. Mary Beth and her sisters Ann, Lisa, and Carol were raised in the shadows of the San Bernardino Mountains in the beautiful Upland/Montclair/Alta Loma area.

Mary Beth graduated from Montclair High School in 1974. In high school, she lettered in multiple sports and was on the homecoming court and student council. She was the editor of the Glaiive yearbook and a National Merit Scholar.

Mary Beth received a BA in English from Cal Poly, Pomona in 1978 and returned to her birth state to earn graduate degrees while teaching undergraduate courses at the University of Iowa. She was eventually selected as the head teaching assistant for the Rhetoric program and instructed, mentored, and evaluated other teaching fellows throughout her master's and Ph.D. programs. In 1987, after completing her oral and written doctoral comprehensive exams, Mary Beth decided to take a year off from working on her dissertation on Jane Austen and teach high school in Lisbon, Iowa for "just one year". Everybody knows how that turned out!

Mary Beth taught at Lisbon for many years. She was happy teaching High School English because she loved literature and teenagers. She won many grants and awards for her teaching, especially for her innovative "project approach". She was featured as an outstanding teacher on a special report on CSPAN and was a frequent presenter at professional conferences and area in-services for various Iowa Districts. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Mary Beth coached one of the largest and most successful Iowa High School Speech Association programs in state history. Many years, Lisbon had more students qualify for All-State Speech than any school of any size. At one time, 20 of Iowa's 100 Individual All-State performers were from her program. She was always so

enormously proud of her students. In addition to teaching and coaching, Mary Beth directed Lisbon's highly active National Honor Society. Under her leadership, the NHS annually sponsored and completed many ambitious projects such as Anti-Bullying Campaigns, a community Homeless Awareness Week which fund-raised for a local shelter, the founding of Lisbon's Halloweentown, the purchase of an AED for the school, Spring cleanup projects, and computer education for elderly citizens to name just a few.

On March 1, 1980, Mary Beth married Douglas Thomas Hunt. He was the love of her life and soul mate. In their many years together, they enjoyed traveling across Iowa, the US and to Canada. They were nature enthusiasts and avid birders. They liked antiquing, watching sports, especially the Hawkeyes, and just being together with family, friends, and their beloved shelties. In 1997 they built their dream home in Oskaloosa and purchased a lake house where they created many memories in Longville, MN in 2016.

Mary Beth had many avocations and hobbies she pursued with enthusiasm. She was an avid birder and longtime member and treasurer of the Iowa Ornithologists Union. She loved to bake and do needlework, especially enjoying gifting her creations to friends and family. Mary Beth enjoyed collecting art and antiques. She was a member of Chief Mahaska #505 Quester Group of Oskaloosa and served terms as their secretary and president.

Of all things associated with Mary Beth, her lifelong passion for words stands out most. She loved books and teaching literature, writing, and research methods as well as working on editing projects and playing competitive Scrabble. She read several books a week, frequently in translation from the Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish, Italian, Indian and most recently, Icelandic languages. If it was quality, classic, or modern literature, she probably had read it or planned to read it.

Mary Beth was a lifelong Catholic and a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Oskaloosa. She served on the Parish Council, Social Justice Committee, and organized the Christmas Giving Tree.

Above all, Mary Beth loved her Doug, her family, her friends, and her shelties. She always said that she led a happy and blessed life and will always be remembered for her tireless energy, incredible integrity, and zest for life. It is so very fitting that her favorite word of all time was "luminous" because it epitomizes her so well.

Mary Beth will live on in the hearts of her loving and devoted husband of 40 years, Douglas Hunt and by her sisters Ann Dittmer, Lisa Dittmer Erbstoesser (Timothy), Carol

Dittmer Solorio (Gabriel) and her nephews Eric, Neil, Mark, John, and Carsten. She also is survived by her loving in-laws, Bruce Hunt (Kathie), Ken Hunt, and Keith Hunt (Julie), nephew Tyler, 3 nieces, Mackenzie Willbanks, Nicky Alderson, and Breanna Hunt, and many other family members.

Mary Beth was preceded in death by her parents, Neil and Helen Dittmer.

Mass of the Christian Burial will be celebrated Tuesday, September 15, 2020, at 10:30 a.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Oskaloosa with the Reverend Troy Richmond officiating. Burial will be at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Oskaloosa. According to the rules put in place by the Iowa Department of Public Health, proper social distancing and reasonable personal protective equipment is advised for attending a religious public event. Mary Beth's family requests everyone attending visitation and Mass to please wear a mask. The funeral Mass will be live streamed at the funeral home's YouTube Channel for those wishing to support the family from a distance. Visitation will begin at 9 Monday morning at the Bates Funeral Chapel. There will be a Rosary recited at 5:30 Monday evening in the Bates Funeral Chapel and the family will be present until 8 p.m. to greet friends and relatives. Memorials may be made to The Mary Beth Hunt Memorial Fund and sent to Bates Funeral Chapel, PO Box 207, Oskaloosa, Iowa, 52577, to be used to support the Public Library and a scholarship fund in her name.

# Cemetery

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**St. Mary's Cemetery**

Oskaloosa, IA, 52577

# Events

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**SEP 14 Visitation - Open** 09:00AM - 05:30PM  
Bates Funeral Chapel  
114 South 7th Street, Oskaloosa, IA, US, 52577

**SEP 14 Rosary** 05:30PM  
Bates Funeral Chapel  
114 South 7th Street, Oskaloosa, IA, US, 52577

**SEP 14 Visitation - Family Present** 06:00PM - 08:00PM  
Bates Funeral Chapel  
114 South 7th Street, Oskaloosa, IA, US, 52577

**SEP 15 Mass of Christian Burial** 10:30AM  
St. Mary's Catholic Church  
315 1st Avenue East, Oskaloosa, IA, US, 52577

# Comments

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“ A webcast video has been added.



**Bates Funeral Chapel** - September 11, 2020 at 12:41 PM

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“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Mary Beth Hunt.



September 12, 2020 at 11:17 AM

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“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Mary Beth Hunt.



September 12, 2020 at 11:13 AM

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“ Mary Beth was my neighbor for many years and my beloved friend even after she no longer lived two doors down. Many times shortly after receiving a phone call around 10 p.m., Mary Beth would show up on my door-step in her slippers and robe in order to borrow an egg or a cup of sugar because she had started a baking project and in the middle of it realized she didn't have all the ingredients she needed! I loved this about her! She once ran to our home to show me the singed hair on her arms after plugging in her Christmas lights while barefoot on her cement stoop, getting a shock that blasted her onto her driveway! We were the kind of friends who could share intimate conversations about our hobbies, our politics, our work (we also taught together in Lisbon), and the people (and dogs) we loved. We laughed together over the silliest things and cried together when first her mother passed away, and then her father. When she moved to Oskie (as she called it), we continued to meet each other in Pella, Coralville, or at her lovely home. After Kevin and I relocated to New Hampshire, she and Doug drove out for a birding adventure in Maine and then stayed with us for a memorable visit. I was just talking about Mary Beth the other day, fondly remembering our walks together in the New England woods and the birds she was thrilled to hear and see. We also laughed about the dinner we attended at the Canoe Club in Hanover, at which there was a magician who entertained us throughout dinner, while Mary Beth kept asking rhetorically, "How does he DO that?" I loved Mary Beth. I will continue to tell my favorite "beloved neighbor" stories and always think of her with the fondness I've always had for her. She encouraged me to join the University Book Club with her when we first met, and I've always been grateful to her for the many book recommendations she shared. I will miss her so much.

-- Laura Spratt

**Laura Spratt** - September 12, 2020 at 10:39 AM

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“ Regina Dittmer and family purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Mary Beth Hunt.



**Regina Dittmer and family** - September 11, 2020 at 08:14 PM

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mary Beth Hunt.



September 11, 2020 at 04:06 PM

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“ Julie Hunt purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Mary Beth Hunt.



**Julie Hunt** - September 11, 2020 at 12:40 PM

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“ My condolences. She was a great teacher and allowed me to explore a lot of emotions through writing without ever trying to censor me. So sad to hear of this loss

**Megan** - September 11, 2020 at 08:47 AM

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“ Our deepest sympathy to you Doug.

**Doug and Mary Ruffridge** - September 10, 2020 at 10:03 PM

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“ as above purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mary Beth Hunt.



**as above** - September 10, 2020 at 11:36 AM

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“ I write this through tears of great sadness at hearing of this loss. Mary Beth provided support and guidance to me after my initial diagnosis, giving me practical tips for combatting the often ravaging effects of chemo even as her own disease advanced. Her actions meant so much to me, and helped me during such an uncertain time. I will miss her and share your sadness and loss. (Montclair High classmates).

**Randall Yates** - September 10, 2020 at 03:28 AM

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“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mary Beth Hunt.



September 09, 2020 at 09:45 PM

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“ Dear Doug and family,  
Jim and I are sorry to hear of Mary Beth's passing. The last communication we had was in July regarding book club. Mary Beth and I were the only ones that liked the book, oh wait, and the Pulitzer Prize Committee! She was truly a kindred spirit when it came to books, television, movies and politics and I shall miss her. We only differed in one area, I love cats not dogs.

You are all in our heart, thoughts and prayers.

Jim and Julie Hansen

**Jim Hansen** - September 09, 2020 at 03:21 PM

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“ I'm so sorry for your loss Doug!  
Thinking and praying for your broken heart and may you hold dearly to all the precious memories that she has left you with.  
~~Kelli

**kelli breuklandee** - September 09, 2020 at 02:34 PM

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“ So sorry Doug, you will miss her, a wonderful talented person, my thoughts and prayers are with you.

**karen powell** - September 09, 2020 at 02:06 PM