



A lasting memorial has been given to Spirit of Hope Church in memory of Barbara J. Hoelscher

October 16, 1937 - April 18, 2014



Barb was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin, to parents who grew up on farms in Houston County; a connection to relatives in rural Minnesota remained important to Barb throughout her life. Barb and her sister Jo were raised in Robbinsdale, Minnesota, and after high school, she studied nursing at Hamline University in St. Paul. In addition to earning the degree that proved the foundation for her career, she met a young engineering student. Doug Hoelscher became not only the love of Barb's life, but also her best friend, travel companion, confidant, and, in her later years, her devoted caregiver.

Barb and Doug's Golden Valley home was a loving place to raise a family and to welcome generations of friends. She became the parent of three children and found a calling for which she was uniquely qualified; her incomparable patience, enduring optimism, and big-hearted empathy entwined to form the perfect mother. Barb threw herself into motherhood with gusto, doing countless things, large and small, for her children. And when the next generation arrived, she wholeheartedly embraced her new role of grandmother, rarely missing a grandchild's dance performance or athletic event, playing with dolls on the living room floor, and traveling to exotic locations.

She worked for many years as a nurse at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, and then, after retirement, she served as a volunteer at the Minnesota Historical Center, Wilder East Care Center in St. Paul, and St. Therese of New Hope Care Center.

Although raised at a time when girls were more likely to play jacks than sports, Barb eventually became an award-winning athlete. She began running on the Western Kentucky University's track, using the long jump pit as a sandbox for her three small kids. Eventually, she went on to run three marathons and took up bicycle racing and touring. With Doug and a group of good friends, she embarked upon epic tours along the Rhine, Danube, and Elbe rivers in Europe, and along the Erie Canal in Upstate New York, and on trails in Wisconsin, northern Idaho, and Minnesota. When not riding their bicycles, she and Doug crisscrossed the country in their camper.

Adventuresome, friendly, and outgoing, Barb excelled at friendships. She was always willing to help others and quick to put their interests ahead of her own. Everyone who had contact with Barb discovered someone whose authenticity was palpable and optimism infectious. These qualities proved essential when diagnosed with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) in September 2010. She received excellent treatment for this bone marrow cancer at Rochester's Mayo Clinic for nearly four years. Eventually, her long fight with MDS finally became too much for this fine woman.

For 40 years, Barb was a devoted member of Spirit of Hope United Methodist Church, where she received spiritual sustenance and meaningful fellowship.



July 4, 2014