



Aurora (Dora) M VanPortfliet

September 13, 1936 - May 6, 2019

Mrs. Aurora M. VanPortfliet age 82 went to be with Lord on Monday May 6, 2019. Aurora was born on September 13, 1936 in San Benito, TX. She is survived by her husband of 65 years Kenneth Lee VanPortfliet; her children Tom (Denise) VanPortfliet, Jeff VanPortfliet, Lori Zemaitis, and Lisa (Jeffrey) Braybrook; her grandchildren Shawna (Dr. Chris) Peterson, Jake Potgeter, Andrew (Jayme) Potgeter, Amber VanPortfliet, Tom Zemaitis, Leah (Jeff) Huyser, Kimberly Braybrook, Jefferson Braybrook, Seth Braybrook, and Tessa Braybrook; seven great grandchildren; her siblings Beatriz Leal, Prajedas Pedraza, and Pedro Pedraza; nieces and nephews. Aurora was preceded in death her great grandchild Adley Peterson; her siblings Francisco Pedraza, Roberto Pedraza, Delia Garza, Gonzalo Pedraza, Oralia Perez, and Ruben Pedraza. The Funeral Service will be held Thursday May 16th at 11:00 AM at Remembrance Church 4575 Remembrance Rd NW where her family will receive visitors one hour before the service. Interment Washington Park Cemetery. The family will receive visitors Wednesday May 15th from 2:00 to 4:00 and 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the Arsulowicz Brothers Remembrance Mortuary, 3525 Remembrance Rd NW. Memorial contributions may be made to Camp Geneva Spanish Immersion Camp.

Aurora (Dora) VanPortfliet was born to Lina and Prajedas Pedraza in San Benito, Texas on September 13, 1936. She loved her nine siblings and they all loved her. Stories were told of them playing in the fields on Grandma's farm, having picnics at the cemetery after cleaning the grave sites of family ancestors, and eating cold delicious raspas (snow cones) handmade by their loving mother after playing hard in the hot Texas sun. Growing up in such a large family made it easy to always have a playmate. However, Dora made friends easily because of her friendly easy going manner and warm smile. Her generous spirit created friendships that lasted a lifetime.

She was hardworking, strong and started her first job at age of 12, ironing shirts for a local family. Having that experience, allowed her to move up into a position at a bakery slicing and wrapping bread. She later worked at the lunch counter making sandwiches at the Driscoll Hotel and then moved up to work at the Amusu movie theater selling tickets. By

then she was a beautiful young woman who turned a few heads of the young servicemen who were stationed at the naval air station in Corpus Christi Texas. Dora sold many movie tickets to one of those servicemen named Kenneth VanPortfliet who became her husband in 1956.

Starting a family together in Grand Rapids Michigan was her next adventure as well as learning about the new culture of family and friends in the Midwest. Funny stories were told such as her trying to learn to drive in the Greenwood Cemetery with Ken as the instructor, learning to cook new and exciting food like the regional favorite, fresh cherry pie without pitting the cherries and baking “pizza pie” in an actual pie pan. However, when she finally learned to cook she was able to create wonderful family meals on a low budget so that her family was well fed and there were a few pennies saved at the end of her grocery shopping that were put into a special fund for fun vacations back to visit family in Texas every year .

Generous and kind are good descriptions of Dora who gave sacrificially to her family and the community through various volunteer jobs. Many people have been touched by her giving spirit and many may remember her from the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, the YWCA, the Cub Scouts, Remembrance Reformed Church, and West Leonard Elementary School. She also did missions work with International Aid as a Spanish translator in Honduras. Helping her 4 kids Tom, Jeff, Lori and Lisa with homework and extra curricular activities gave her great joy even if it meant she had to stay up late or get up early! She also worked tirelessly as an Educator for the Migrant Program at the Kenowa Hills Public Schools.

Once the grandkids started to come she combined her love of culinary tasks and crafting with spending quality time with her grandkids baking cookies and making crafts. Then when she retired in 1996, Dora and Ken spent winters on South Padre Island Texas where she could be closer to her Texas family and enjoy the warm weather. She also was active doing crafts, bible study and family genealogy.

She loved the Lord Jesus Christ and always had the highest standards for herself and her family because it is what Jesus wants for his people. Colossians 3:23-24 states, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for man, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” She was always outspoken about doing the right thing, even if it was not what people wanted to hear. A life well lived is what she wanted for all who she came in contact with and it was the goal she set for herself. She accomplished that goal with flying colors! PRAISE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Cemetery

**Washington Park
Cemetery**
1204 Richmond St NW
Grand Rapids, MI, 49504

Events

MAY Visitation 02:00PM - 04:00PM

15

Remembrance Chapel
3525 Remembrance Road NW, Walker, MI, US,
49534

MAY Visitation 07:00PM - 09:00PM

15

Remembrance Chapel
3525 Remembrance Road NW, Walker, MI, US,
49534

MAY Visitation 10:00AM - 11:00AM

16

Remembrance Chapel
3525 Remembrance Road NW, Walker, MI, US,
49534

MAY Funeral Service 11:00AM

16

Remembrance Chapel
3525 Remembrance Road NW, Walker, MI, US,
49534

Comments



“ Our sincere condolences to the VanPortfliet family from the Kishman family.

Patty Kishman - May 14 at 02:02 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Lisa Braybrook - May 13 at 08:35 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Aurora (Dora) M VanPortfliet.



May 12 at 10:44 PM



“ I'm very sorry to hear about the passing of "Aunt Dora". She was an exceptionally warm & loving woman. She always made me feel welcome & took time to catch up with me when I was home on leave. She had a very sharp & curious mind. I remember Dora giving me a copy of her Abuela's Cookbook. I often used that cookbook when I tried to create some of her family recipes but I could never replicate the quality & taste of her own cooking! I'm sorry for the loss of Dora but I'm joyful that she's home with our Lord Jesus & will never experience pain or suffering.
Craig Wood

Craig Wood - May 10 at 05:33 PM



“ My condolences to the VanPortfliet family at this time.Dora was a sweet lady and will be missed by all who knew her.remembering you all in our thoughts and prayers
Lisa,Tyler,and Alaina White

Lisa White - May 16 at 09:38 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Arsulowicz Brothers Mortuaries - May 10 at 09:38 AM