



Judy E. (Faunce) Smith

November 4, 1940 - March 27, 2026

With great sadness and deep gratitude we celebrate the life of Judy E. Smith, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, sister, baker, gardener, and friend — who passed away unexpectedly at Munson Hospital in Traverse City on March 27, 2026. Born in Cadillac, Michigan, to William and Dorothy (Hodges) Faunce on November 4, 1940, Judy lived a vibrant and full life, defined by her generosity, resilience, and spark. She gave freely of her time, her talents, and—whether you asked for it or not—her advice, which was usually spot on.

She is lovingly survived by her husband of 42 years, Rex K. Smith; her son, Kevin W. Kearney; daughter, Johanna C. Carey (James); stepchildren, Shad Smith (Becky) and Lisa R. Werner (Kurt); and her sisters, Dorothy A. Stenman, Barbara J. Laino, and Marjorie L. VanDyke. She also leaves behind her beloved grandchildren: Kyle Kearney, Cole Carey, Catie Carey, Jillian Bigony (Adam), Jay Carey, Brooke Smith (Ryan), Matthew Smith (Emily), Michael Smith, Izzi Lopez (Andres), Daniel Fisher (Melanie), Brianne Fogal (Paul), Logan Knott, and Aleah Safago (Joseph); along with numerous great grand-children. She also leaves a devoted circle of nieces and nephews, each of whom held a special place in her heart.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her first husband, William E. Kearney; her daughters, Melissa Ann Kearney and Michele C. Ward; her siblings, Marilyn Johnston, Robert J. Faunce, Mary Alice Whipple, and William

H. Faunce.

Judy cherished her life in Cadillac and the large family that surrounded her. Her circle of friends and family was wide and she loved any opportunity she had to visit with them, especially hosting parties and having large gatherings at her house. She especially loved hosting the holidays and her grandchildren will always remember the White Elephant exchange at Christmas. She kept in touch with many of her Cadillac High School Class of 1958 friends and spoke fondly of her youth. She was spirited, energetic, hard-working, kind, and generous. She loved music and dancing and we are sure she danced her way into heaven; likely already organizing a party, complete with good music and great food.

Judy's life was not without hardship and was marked by the loss of her first husband, Bill, in 1972, followed by the profound loss of her daughter Melissa in 1973. She worked hard to provide a good and stable life for her children, making sure they learned to ski at Caberfae as a family, had motorcycles for Kevin, and Michele was able to have her first horse which became a lifelong passion until her passing in 2022. Judy wholeheartedly welcomed Shad and Lisa into the family that she so deeply cherished. She showed them all the value of hard work and resilience as they each made their own path.

She lived with purpose and energy, happiest when immersed in a project, whether it was redecorating a room, planting a garden, planning a meal, or hosting an event. There was always a "next project," and somehow, she made each one look effortless.

Judy spent most of her working years at Kysor Cadillac, where she built lasting relationships and truly enjoyed her work in Marketing and Human Resources. She valued the people she worked with and carried those friendships with her long after retirement.

In retirement, Judy and Rex enjoyed many happy winters in Florida, where they were surrounded by Faunce siblings, fellow Cadillac snowbirds, and where they made many new dear friends. These years were filled with laughter, sunshine, golf, beach days, pool days, and dancing.

Of all her roles, Judy's greatest joy was being a grandmother. She created lasting memories with her grandchildren—teaching them to swim in her pool, line dance on the patio, cheering them on as they braved the diving board, and listening proudly as they sang on her deck.

Judy's legacy is one of grit, generosity, humor, and unwavering love. She will be deeply missed but fondly remembered in the many lives she touched. Her spirit lives on in every act of kindness, every blooming garden, every shared meal, and every attempt to recreate her famously unwritten chocolate chip cookie recipe.

The family extends heartfelt thanks to the many friends, neighbors, and loved ones who enriched Judy's life. Rex would like to especially thank her Friday morning coffee ladies, the bridge ladies, Rhonda, and all the others that visited and brought meals to the house over the last several years as we are all so thankful for their support and friendship.

We hope to carry forward the warmth, laughter, and love she effortlessly gave. She will be forever missed.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the First Presbyterian Church in Cadillac on Friday, April 10, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. with visitation starting at 10:00 a.m. and a luncheon to follow. If you plan to attend, and are able, please wear something blue in Judy's honor. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to

Love, Inc or Hospice of Michigan. An online guestbook is available at www.petersonfh.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR **10**. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
221 E Harris St
Cadillac, MI 49601-2195
(231) 775-7111

Tribute Wall

PM

“ *Judy - dynamic, fun, caring and kind. A perfect friend. Full of life. Now the brightest star in the evening sky. We love you, Judy. Patrick and Patsy McCarthy*

Patrick McCarthy - April 13 at 04:42 PM

DN

“ *I'm very sorry to hear of Judy's passing and my thoughts are with Rex, Johanna, and Kevin and families. And to Shad and Lisa as they care for their dad. Judy and I grew up together at the First Presbyterian Sunday School and were classmates until our 1958 graduation. Then she and Rex had a wonderful marriage, a mutually supportive relationship. Condolences to all, but especially to my friend Rex.*

Douglas C Nelson - April 10 at 12:54 PM

LP

“ *Love, Melissa Palepu purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Judy E. (Faunce) Smith.*



Love, Melissa Palepu - April 08 at 04:03 PM

LP

“ *Love, Melissa Palepu planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Judy E. (Faunce) Smith.*

Love, Melissa Palepu - April 08 at 04:03 PM

CM

“ *She is a wonderful person, hugs and prayers to all family and friends she has left left behind*

Carla and Kevin Moffit - April 02 at 05:58 PM

AO

“ *One of the sweetest ladies I have ever met...*

Amanda Ough - April 02 at 12:03 PM

RL

“ *When her baking years were in full swing I always looked for a reason to stop at Judy's, sneak in the back door and raid the baking jar! You never knew what was gonna be in it, you just knew it was gonna be awesome! She was always willing to bake for a special event, given you gave her a day, or maybe 1/2 a day. I will never forget the massive birthday cake she made for me 2 years ago, which my wife made me share with others because of its size. I loved the last couple boat rides we had this summer, it was always our treat to have Judy and Dodo on the boat. I will miss her smile, kindness and opinion.*

Rick Lawrence - April 01 at 08:42 PM

DR

“ *I will always remember Judy's kindness and loyalty, and our ladies' golf league games where we partnered for a few years. She was always supportive and fun. Above all, I remember her total love and commitment to her family. She endured many hardships during her life, but faced them with strength and grace. I was blessed to know her.*

Diane Rensberry - April 01 at 08:24 PM

KM

Lots of good years , knew judys kindness as a kid and I will miss her cookie jar and our wonderful visits , we shared many , she was kind and caring about others and deeply will be missed .

Going to Cadillac won't be same without her but I have wonderful memories of my visits all these yrs .

Deepest sympathy for the entire family.

Such a great person deeply will miss our visits we talked about everything .

Kristine malleaux - April 05 at 08:53 AM

TR

I have know Judy since the third grade. She has always been one of my favorite people. Strong in character always resilient, she persisted through the hardest of times. I'll always remember her wonderful smile and twinkling eyes. She will be missed by so many.

Tom Rensberry - April 06 at 01:04 PM