



## Karen Ruth (Bouwma) Elenbaas

August 26, 1948 - March 5, 2012

Karen Ruth (Bouwma) Elenbaas of Cadillac and Scottsdale, AZ died from complications of pancreatic cancer on Monday, March 5, 2012. She was 63. Mrs. Elenbaas was born August 26, 1948, to Alfred and Ruth (VanderVlugt) Bouwma. She married Gary Elenbaas on November 26, 1971 in the Cadillac United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Elenbaas graduated from Cadillac High School in 1966 as valedictorian of her class. While in high school she worked as a bookkeeper and teller at The Cadillac State Bank. She also served as the Sunday School Pianist for the Cadillac Wesleyan Methodist Church. She graduated with honors from Central Michigan University where she received her bachelors and masters degrees. She was a business teacher and taught one year at Hill-McCloy High School in Montrose, Michigan, one year at Northern Michigan Christian High School in McBain, and 30 years at Cadillac High School. She also worked with her husband in his construction business doing the bookwork and helping design the interiors of the homes he built and remodeled.

She was a member of the Cadillac United Methodist Church where she worked on a part-time basis after retirement. She served as a Church Financial Counter for over 20 years. Since 2005, she and her husband wintered in Scottsdale, Arizona and attended the North Scottsdale United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Elenbaas admired her husband's craftsmanship. She was a proud and loving mother for their two children. She started playing tennis at Diggin's tennis courts as a young girl and at the age of 16 was the female tennis Champion for her age group in the Cadillac Tennis Tournament. She continued to play tennis for another 40 years. She enjoyed going for walks, exercising in the pool, doing Sudoku puzzles, attending and watching sporting events, and most of all, spending time with her family.

Survivors include her husband and best friend Gary Elenbaas; children Jon (Natale) Elenbaas of Hudsonville and Kari Elenbaas (Mike Topolewski) of Royal Oak; brother Jim Bouwma of Cadillac; brother-in-law Ron (Judy) Elenbaas of Yorba Linda, California; niece Laurie Elenbaas of Anaheim, California; nephew Tim (Lisa) Elenbaas of Perris, California; and aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Alfred Bouwma in 1999 and Ruth Bouwma in 2009.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 10, at the United Methodist Church of Cadillac at 2:00 p.m. with Parish Assistant Judy Coffey officiating. Friends may meet the family from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 8 at the Peterson Funeral Home in Cadillac. According to her wishes, cremation has taken place.

Memorial contributions may be made to the United Methodist Church of Cadillac or Mercy Hospice of Cadillac. An online guestbook is available at [www.petersonfh.com](http://www.petersonfh.com).

# Tribute Wall

MI

“ Gary and family -- I am so very sorry. Karen was a great person and a wonderful teacher with high standards and a sweetness that I always appreciated. Sending hugs to all of you.

Martha Irvine - March 05, 2013 at 04:08 PM

KT

“ I send my condolences to Gary and all the family members.

Keith Taylor - March 20, 2012 at 10:07 AM

DG

“ Gary and Family, We are so sorry for your loss. Karen was a devoted Wife, Mother and Teacher. Our prayers are with you.

Derald and Bev Gullekson - March 15, 2012 at 09:13 AM

LM

“ My condolences on your loss. Karen was devoted to her family. My prayers and thoughts are with you.

Laurie McKay - March 11, 2012 at 01:19 PM

SB

“ Our sympathy to your family. Karen was the good friend and citizen we all hope to be.

Stan and Sheri Benander - March 10, 2012 at 04:10 PM

NV

“ My deepest sympathy goes out to Gary and the rest of his family. Although we only knew Karen for a few short years here in Arizona, she became an instant friend to so many in our community. She will truly be missed.

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**Nick Velch** - March 10, 2012 at 03:49 PM

JJ

“ God bless Mrs Elenbaas and her compassion and patience with all of her students. She was a beautiful person inside and out.--I am sure I was the worst typer that ever went through her typing classes. (She even put tape over my keys!)--I explained to her I was afraid of making mistakes, so I plodded along SO slowly.-For years, I have wanted to tell her personally how fast I can type " on a computer" , being I can now go back and correct my mistakes. I find it ironic that the very skills she tried to teach me, I am now using writing in her guest book.--My prayers go out to Mr Elenbaas (another of my favorite teachers) and the rest of the family.

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**Jeri Johnson** - March 10, 2012 at 02:20 PM

CC

“ Gary, Jon and Kari, our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. You all were such great neighbors and we will always remember fondly the great friendship Karen had with our Mom.

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**Craig Culver** - March 08, 2012 at 10:11 PM

TE

“ To All The Elenbaas Family: From the Ti Elenbaas Family: Sorrow fills our hearts over the passing of Karen! What an outstanding human being in EVERY respect!!! Our prayers are with your entire family. With Love and Respect, Tim/Char Elenbaas.

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**timothy j. elenbaas** - March 08, 2012 at 06:30 PM

DG

“ I'm deeply sorry for your loss. May God give you peace and comfort during this difficult time.

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**Desiree Grogan** - March 08, 2012 at 05:49 PM

RM

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss. We're thinking of you  
Gary

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**Rob & Lynn Montague** - March 08, 2012 at 01:42 PM

MW

“ Gary, Kari, & John, We have been praying for all of you these past months and will continue to do so. We wish we could be there with you at this time. Karen was a special person and we are all going to miss her presence. Know that God is with you all at this difficult time. Our prayers for you as a family with continue. Love, Dalene & Mike

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**Mike & Dalene Wilkinson** - March 08, 2012 at 11:57 AM

JG

“ I am so sorry for your loss, words can not express alone how sorry I am, I loved her as my teacher she always gave me a positive direction in my life. I can feel assured that she is leading worship in heaven as she did here on earth.

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**Jodi Mathews Goulder** - March 08, 2012 at 11:10 AM

TH

“ I remember a sweetheart dinner at the Methodist church where Karen read a poem to her sweetheart, Gary. God bless Karen a loving person.

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**Tom & Ann Hunt** - March 08, 2012 at 09:37 AM

NV

“ I was very sorry to learn of your loss. I remember Karen clearly and can hear her speaking as a teacher, a co-worker, a mom, a wife, and a friend. May the memories you have of her help you as you go through the following days and months. You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

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**Nancy Vollmar** - March 07, 2012 at 05:39 PM

AC

“ We are sorry to hear of your loss. May she rest in peace. We knew her from teaching at CAPS.

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**Alice & Tim Cook** - March 07, 2012 at 10:50 AM

SH

“ My deepest sympathy to Gary and and the rest of the family. Karen was one of my favorite teachers in many areas of my life, as a child she was my Sunday School teacher as well as my typing teacher at CHS, in my adult life she supported me with her real estate transactions and always taught me something new with each transaction. The Lord has taken an angel home.I will miss her terribly.

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**Sara Parmenter Haskin** - March 07, 2012 at 10:23 AM

SM

“ I'm so sorry to hear of Karen's passing. It was just 6 weeks ago I saw her in AZ and we got to ' catch up' what's been happening in our lives. (Karen and I graduated together). May you feel God's presence and His Daddy strong arms around you as you go through the days ahead. My sincerest condolences to all of the family.

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**Sharon Moritz** - March 07, 2012 at 09:06 AM

TK

“ My sympathy to Gary and the rest of the family. When I remember my days at CHS, I remember her as one of my favorite teachers and certainly the typing skills I learned are used each and every day. She was one of the best teachers that CHS had -- and was kind, considerate, and a real friend to the students. She will be missed.

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**Tom Klarquist** - March 07, 2012 at 08:59 AM