



[TOP](#)

In Memory of Debra Ann Swafford

SEPTEMBER 23RD 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

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After a lengthy battle with cancer, our beloved wife, mother, Nana, great-grandma & sister, Debra Ann Swafford, passed away on September 22, 2023. Debbie, as she was known to friends & family, passed away at Delta South Nursing & Rehabilitation in Sikeston, Missouri, surrounded by family & loved ones. Debbie left us with a legacy of kindness, love and quiet strength as well as many treasured memories.

Debbie was born to Wayne Benson and Betty Menz Keesee in Arnold, Missouri on August 12, 1956, the second of four siblings. The family moved from Arnold to Commerce, MO and Debbie graduated from Kelly High School in 1974. In high school she was drum majorette and enjoyed twirling, a skill which she passed on to her daughters. After high school, Debbie became a licensed insurance agent and worked for Davis & Byrd Insurance in Sikeston, MO for seven years. From her first marriage, she was blessed with a daughter, Carrie Ann Miller (Haynes), born in 1977.

On May 22, 1981, Debbie was united in marriage to Norman Swafford at his residence in rural Bernie, MO. Through that marriage she became a loving stepmother to Noelle Dawn Swafford. Norman and Debbie created a loving family with their girls & spent 42 happily-married years traveling the United States, making happy memories.

Debbie joined Norman in Swafford Photographic Service, where she kept the business organized & kept Norm in line. For most of their 42 years together they photographed countless schools, dance studios, weddings and families. Debbie was beloved by the clients, teachers and students. Never far from each other's sides, Debbie and Norm were

also a team in his courtroom, where she became his court clerk. Norm's first court clerk passed away and Debbie was asked to fill in for her, which she did...for 38 years, even working past Norm's retirement as clerk for Judge Shannon Foster.

One of Debbie's best friends described her perfectly when she said, "If you can't get along with Debbie Swa?ord, you can't get along with anyone." Debbie was known for her kindness, her peaceful spirit and her love of cats, especially Flu?y, Mu?n and Miss Kitty. She kept cat food in her car and was feeding ten cats around town until she could no longer drive. She had a true loving heart for animals and enjoyed sitting on her covered deck watching birds and drinking wine. Most of Norm & Debbie's trips included rivers & waterfalls and the mountains, which she loved so much. Some of her happiest memories were visiting the Yule Log Cabin with her grandkids and enjoying nachos and wine at River Ridge. She loved her grandkids and her great- grandson & loved baking them her famous sugar cookies. Debbie was a talented cross-stitcher and she spent hours stitching with her daughters on vacations and at their homes. Debbie was absolutely beloved by her sons-in-law as well. Debbie was simply the best example of Christian faith and embodied treating others as she would want to be treated.

Debbie is survived by her husband, Norman & daughters Carrie (David) Haynes & Noelle (Chuck) Buttry. Other survivors include one sister, Connie (Eddie) Workman of Scott City, MO; two brothers, Rodney (Bridget) Benson of Kelso, MO; Stacy Benson of Scott City, MO; one aunt, Faye (Alan) Farrow of Fruitland, MO; six grandchildren, Ryder Buttry of Dallas, TX; Wyatt Buttry & Brooks Buttry of Fayetteville, AR; Hannah (Michael) Hale of Dexter, MO; Shelby Haynes of Walnut Ridge, AR; Madelyn Haynes of Dexter, MO; and one great-grandson, Memphis Hale, son of Michael & Hannah.

Debbie was preceded in death by her dad, Wayne Benson; her mom, Betty Keesee; and her stepfather, Glenn Keesee.

The family would like to thank Barry & Michelle Aycock, Jason Shelton, Shannon Foster, Delta South Care Center (especially Bobbie Young & Stephanie Markham), Crown Hospice and all of Debbie's medical caregivers at Siteman Cancer Center, especially Dr. Daniel Morgensztern, M.D. & Mary Ellen Flanagan, NP, and countless friends and relatives.

Visitation will be held at Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. A memorial service will then be held in the Mathis Funeral Home Chapel on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. Interment will follow in the Missouri State Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield, Missouri.

Memorials may be made to wreathsacrossamerica.org or The Humane Society of Missouri.

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