



## Geraldine "Geri" Chrustowski

July 4, 1931 - October 20, 2012

On Independence Day, 1931, the country celebrated Geraldine Kalinowski's entry into the world with fireworks lighting up the sky, a fitting tribute to a lady with an independent spirit who would in turn light up the lives of so many others in her 81 years. Born to Mary and Stephen Kalinowski and delivered at home, as was customary at that time, Geri lived her early life on the east side of Detroit in the area later to be considered "Poletown." She was preceded by an older brother (Stephen) Ray and Virginia, and followed by a younger brother Richard. She was baptized into the Catholic Church at birth, and was actively involved in the church throughout her life. Geri received a Catholic school education, attending elementary school at St. Hyacinth down the street from her childhood home on Farnsworth, and attending high school at St. Josaphat. Geri was a good student and actually was offered a scholarship for Madonna College upon her graduation from high school in 1949. However, times were different, particularly for girls, and difficulties figuring out the finances and logistics of daily transportation to college caused her to have to decline.

Geri was raised in a tight knit community. Through her neighbor across the street and childhood friend, Richard Korotko, Geri was introduced to Richard's school friend, John Chrustowski, and in 1953 John and Geri were married. Richard went on to marry John's younger sister Sylvia, and Geri's younger brother, Richard Kalinowski went on to marry John's cousin Rosalie, uniting

the two families in multiple ways in bonds which lasted throughout their lives. John and Geri were often accompanied by other life long friends Art & Lottie Jozefczyk, and John's older sister Eleanor and her husband Norbert. This tight knit group of John & Geri, Art & Lottie, Sylvia & Richard, and Eleanor & Norb remained close--throughout marriages, children, moves, and losses. Where one was, the others could usually be found sharing in their joys and sorrows. They brought out the best in each other, keeping that childlike spirit alive in each other.

After marriage, John & Geri initially lived above Geri's parents' home where they welcomed their first born, Michael. Soon after, they purchased their first home on Fredro on the east side of Detroit and became members of Our Lady Queen of Apostles, where John continues to attend and serve as an usher. It should have come as no surprise that their new home on Fredro was only four blocks away from the home of Art & Lottie! Michael was followed by three other children, Susan, John and Paul. For a good part of those early years, Geri was a homemaker, taking care of her four children and being involved in the activities at the church and Our Lady Queen of Apostles school where all four children attended. Geri's involvement with the church resulted in the establishment of too many deep and lasting friendships to mention. At various times, Geri was involved in the Ladies Auxiliary, Bingos and the Church Festival Committees, and she served as a lector and minister of the Eucharist at Church.

In 1975 Geri began to work at what at that time was known as the Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC), along with Lottie and some other ladies from the parish. Geri worked there for 15 years, solidifying her friendships with the ladies she had already known, and making new friends which lasted for the rest of her life. Geri's work ethic was recognized and admired there. She was given more responsibilities over the years, and gained the respect and friendship of her supervisor. Even after retirement in

1991, Geri, her former boss, Lottie, and many of her friends from work continued their monthly lunch outings to maintain those connections, and celebrate their birthdays with each other.

In 1985, the family moved from Detroit, to their current home on Lund in Warren—of course, within a mile from the homes of Art & Lottie, Richard & Sylvia, and Geri's younger brother Rich and his wife Rosalie! Despite the move, they continued to return to Queen of Apostles and maintain their involvement there.

John and Geri's family continued to grow, and her love grew exponentially with each addition. Michael and his wife MaryJo brought forth five grandchildren, Michael, Mark, Kevin and twins, Mary & Sarah. Michael, the first born grandson, from his marriage to Kristy gave Geri & John their first two great-grandchildren, Noah & Chloe. Susan brought forth Matthew, Steven and David from her first marriage, and Kristen from her current marriage to Randy Summers. John, currently married to Connie, contributed Jessica, Marybeth, and John from his first marriage, and extended the family with the introduction of three step grandchildren. Finally, Paul, with partner Scott Jackson, gave Geri & John their final grandchild through adoption, Olivia. Blended or non-traditional families made no difference to Geri as she loved them all the same. Grandchildren in particular were the joy of Geri's life, and she enjoyed when her retirement allowed her to spend more time with them. There was never a birthday, graduation, sports event, dance recital, or other special occasion which Grandma and Grandpa would miss. Despite humble accommodations and cramped quarters at times, gatherings at Grandma & Grandpa's were some of the family's happiest and most memorable times, filled with fun, laughter and home cooking. Grandma's love for goodies and "junk food" was relished by the grandchildren, and it was a known fact that Grandma's was the place you could get treats you might not get at home. Grandma never had a

shortage of Gummy Bears, potato chips, and assortment of ice cream, or chocolate chip cookies—always shared with an additional generous helping of Grandma’s love.

Geri’s caring nature was not just experienced by her children and grandchildren, but by her own parents, whom Geri cared for in their own infirmities and old age, and by her sister Virginia, who preceded Geri in death from cancer. Geri was also preceded in death by her older brother Ray. Even until recent years, when Geri’s health prevented it, she continued to go to Queen of Apostles every Monday afternoon with John, Art & Lottie and feed lunch to the seniors and conduct a Bingo. It became quite a joke in recent years that many of these “seniors” Geri made lunch for were several years her junior!

Geri enjoyed a good retirement, which not only allowed her to spend time with her grandchildren, but to continue to enjoy her life long friendships. She enjoyed vacations with her friends, doing things and going places she did not get the opportunity to do before. Trips to casinos were popular, but the most memorable times were such events as a cruise and a trip to Hawaii. She enjoyed the simple things as well, such as regular breakfasts at Big Boy on 12 Mile & Hoover. It was often joked that there was brick there in the building engraved with their name on it they were there so often!

Over the past five years, Geri’s health steadily declined, with a worsening of arthritis, and what would only be known to us recently to be a progressive degenerative neurological disorder, which ultimately robbed her of her ability to remember, move, care for herself, speak, eat or ultimately even remain awake and alert. Despite her ability to openly convey it, even in her end stages, Geri’s love and warmth could still be felt by all. She spent her final months in the care of Evergreen Health & Living Center, where Scott was able to supervise her daily health care. Geri passed peacefully and in comfort, on

October 20, 2012 surrounded by her husband of 59 years and her children. Appropriately so, this was Sweetest Day this year. One could not conceive of a sweeter person!

The family would like to extend our most sincere gratitude to all of the caring staff at Evergreen Health & Living and Beaumont Hospice. We also thank everyone who visited, called, sent flowers or food, made contributions in Geri's name, shared memories of Geri or kept us in your thoughts and prayers. No gesture went unnoticed or appreciated.

The happy, healthy times far exceeded the challenges in recent years, and it is these joyous memories the family wishes you all can hold on to. The next 4th of July, when you look up in the night sky and see fireworks, remember Geri in your own special way, and know that some of those fireworks might not be the ones that someone shot into the sky, but possibly some of Geri's radiance shining back down from Heaven.

# Cemetery Details

## Resurrection Cemetery

18201 Clinton River Rd  
Clinton Township, MI 48038  
(586) 286-9020

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **22**. 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Wasik Funeral Home - Warren  
11470 Thirteen Mile Road  
Warren, MI 48093  
(586) 751-3131  
warren@wasikfuneralhome.com

## Visitation

OCT **23**. 2:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Wasik Funeral Home - Warren  
11470 Thirteen Mile Road  
Warren, MI 48093  
(586) 751-3131  
warren@wasikfuneralhome.com

## Rosary

OCT **23**. 7:00 PM (ET)

Wasik Funeral Home - Warren  
11470 Thirteen Mile Road  
Warren, MI 48093  
(586) 751-3131  
warren@wasikfuneralhome.com

## Instate at Church

OCT **24**. 9:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady Queen of Apostles  
3851 Prescott  
Hamtramck, Mi

## Funeral Mass

OCT **24**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady Queen of Apostles  
3851 Prescott  
Hamtramck, Mi

# Tribute Wall

MC

“ To my uncle and cousins and all the Chrustowski family, my thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of grief. May peace and comfort come from the loving memories you all share; though physically absent she'll always live in your hearts!

*Mark Chowanic (nephew)*

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**Mark Chowanic** - October 24, 2012 at 10:47 AM

MC

*Thank You Mark, you and yours are in our prayers also. Mike*

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**Michael Chrustowski** - October 26, 2012 at 07:20 PM

RD

“ To the Chrustowski family, a sincere sorrow for your loss. I will always remember the good memories I shared with my sister Geri, going back many years to even our childhood. Geri was always kind, and loving towards everyone. My only hope for now is that Rose and Geri are together, and looking down on us, with the guidance we need till we meet them again.

*Loving brother, Richard*

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**Richard Kalinowski ( brother of deceased** - October 21, 2012 at 07:32 PM

KS

*Sue, So sorry to hear of the loss of your mom. Losing your mom isn't easy, I lost mine about a month ago. I will be praying for you and your family in this difficult time. The good memories of your mom will be a great comfort for the days to come.*

*Kathi Maciejewski Slizewski*

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**Kathi Maciejewski Slizewski** - October 21, 2012 at 09:04 PM