

Ethel Macheel – AD 1976 Nursing

Ethel (Tiny) Mae Macheel (Martin), 78, of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, passed away Saturday, May 7, 2022, at Lake Region Hospital in Fergus Falls.

On February 12, 1944, Tiny was born in Marion County, Indianapolis, to Everett and Julia Martin. She attended Southport High School but did not graduate. At 18, she joined the Army and was stationed in Germany for several years. During her time in the Army, she finished her GED and received nursing training. The Army is where she received her nickname "Tiny," which she greatly preferred to Ethel.

After her discharge from the Army, she moved to Fargo, North Dakota, where she received a two-year RN degree from North Dakota State University. While in college, she met Joe Macheel. After college, she moved back to Indianapolis and married Joe.

Soon after, they relocated to Wahpeton, North Dakota, and became parents to four daughters; Joeleetta, Jacinta, Javinya, and JaKimba. During this time, Tiny worked at the Wahpeton Health Care Center. Once all her children were in school, she went back to school herself and received a bachelor's of nursing degree from Moorhead State University

In 1989, Tiny and Joe divorced. Tiny and the girls then moved to Fergus Falls, and she began working at the Fergus Falls Regional Treatment Center (RTC). While raising her children as a single mother and working full time, she returned to school again. She received her Master's Degree in Mental Health Nursing from the University of Minnesota in 2006.

Tiny worked at the RTC until its close in 2005. After that, she worked at the Community Behavioral Health Hospital until her retirement in 2011.

Tiny was a devout advocate for mental health issues and wholeheartedly believed in fundamental human rights for all. She was unwavering in her belief that all people deserve compassion and respect. She was a member of many groups such as the Minnesota Nursing Association, AAUW, DAR, ASPCA, ACLU, Otter Tail County DFL, and routinely donated to the Salvation Army, St. Joseph's Indian School, and Southern Poverty Law Center. She was a union representative for many years because she felt driven to ensure that she and her coworkers were treated fairly.

Tiny was an activist for human rights and believed in the power of non-violent demonstrations. She marched for equality and human rights causes and brought her daughters to the events. Tiny was dedicated to improving her home and was constantly doing projects and renovations. Her passion for yard work was eternal, and any free time she had would be spent in her backyard. Every time anyone would visit, she would show you all of the new flowers and yard ornaments.

Tiny was a highly creative person but never considered herself an artist. She enjoyed singing and was active in church choirs. She also enjoyed dancing, a passion that started in her youth while dancing on a local version of American Bandstand in Indianapolis. She also enjoyed acting in community theater productions. Her favorite characters she played on stage were from the plays Nunsense and The Wizard of Oz. Before her death, people would still stop her on the street years after the play productions to talk about her community acting performances.

Tiny was also an avid reader. She would read at least a book a week and had done so for her entire adult life. She was fascinated by science, archaeology, religion, and spirituality and was always in the process of reading a book about one of those topics.

Tiny was also a writer. She wrote weekly columns in the Wahpeton Daily News and The Fergus Falls Daily Journal. She was a teacher at heart and enjoyed sharing her knowledge through the written word.

And last but certainly not least, Tiny was a devoted grandmother. She had one biological grandchild, Xyola Holm, who was the center of her world. Tiny and Xyola had an incredibly close bond and were always in each other's company. They would volunteer at the Salvation Army, the Humane Society, and Prairie Wetlands together and were always seen laughing and joking with each other.

Beyond her biological grandchild, Tiny had many children and young adults who consider her their grandmother. Tiny would open her arms to any child that needed love and was always ready to give a grandma hug.

The world lost a brilliant, talented, compassionate, loving, charitable, hilarious woman when Tiny passed on. She will be missed by so, so many.

Ethel is survived by her brothers Stanley Martin, Jay Martin, Charlie Martin, Ronnie Martin, her sister Susie Cooper (Martin), Joeleetta Valentine (Macheel), Jacinta Zens (Macheel), Javinya Macheel, JaKimba Macheel, and Xyola Holm, Megan, Ben, and Sarah Olson, and all of her "adopted" children and grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her mother Julia, her father Everett, her sister Zelma Rice (Martin), her sister Edith Scherrer (Martin), and her brothers Clarence, Randle, and Bradley.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 4:00 PM Friday, May 13, 2022, at Federated Church in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, with a visitation beginning at 2:00 PM.