



Rheita M. Schmer

February 12, 1946 - January 13, 2017

Rheita Schmer, 70, of Grand Island, passed away January 13, 2017, following a bout with breast cancer.

A celebration of life gathering will be held from 5-7 p.m. Wednesday at All Faiths Funeral Home.

Rheita was born February 12, 1946, in Denver, Colorado, to John and Lillian (Turgeon) Morledge. Rheita was born at Fitzsimons Army Hospital at the same time that General Dwight D. Eisenhower was there on business and a hospital tour. The story is that when he arrived at the nursery he was asked to choose the prettiest baby there, and he gave Rheita the honors.

Rheita and her parents moved to Grand Island when she was 3. She attended Stolley Park Elementary, Walnut Junior High and graduated from Grand Island Senior High School in 1964.

She married Gary Hooper at First Presbyterian Church in Grand Island in 1964. They lived in Grand Island. Rheita worked in several jewelry and antique stores in Grand Island and had a keen knowledge and great love of gemstones, gold and antiques throughout her life. She also a great appreciation of art and the ballet. She enjoyed listening to grandson Connor play cello and until she recently became ill, rarely missed his concerts or

performances.

Rheita was a lifelong reader who read thousands of books over the years. She was very knowledgeable in history, politics and world affairs. Rheita enjoyed watching classic movies and "I Love Lucy" reruns.

Rheita was a true "Dog Whisperer". She adored dogs and would learn the name of every dog she met on her daily walks, always bringing them treats. She also had a unique ability to get neighborhood squirrels to come to her and eat from her hand.

Rheita enjoyed being a "young" grandma and great-grandma and was known as "Grandba" by all. Always a generous person, she enjoyed giving gifts to those she loved and cared for, and she would always help if she knew someone was in need.

In 2008, Rheita met John Paul "Jack" Dudziak, who would become her fiancé and constant companion. Jack died in October 2015.

Rheita is survived by a daughter and son-in-law, Alecia "Ali" and William Kluver; grandchildren, Zachary Smith of Philadelphia, Whitney Smith of Lincoln and Connor Merchant Smith, at UNK in Kearney; three great-grandchildren, Emma, Catherine and Christian Smith of Philadelphia; a brother, Michael Morledge; a sister, Patricia Eihusen; and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a son-in-law, Andrew Smith and her companion, Jack Dudziak.

Memorials are suggested to the Central Nebraska Humane Society.

Cemetery Details

Grand Island City Cemetery

Grand Island, NE

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Gathering

JAN 18. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

All Faiths Funeral Home
2929 S Locust St
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 398-2929
allfaiths@giallfaiths.com
<https://www.giallfaiths.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Rheita M. Schmer*

October 08, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ *I worked with Rita at the Grand Island Independent, and always considered her a good friend. When she told me she had a grandson in high school, I knew I had found a new home for a like-new suit. Rita would later tell me her grandson wore that suit when he participated in debate.*

Rita was always fond of animals but didn't particularly care for bugs. Two co-workers at The Independent once placed a large rubber spider on top of a stack of newspapers and made sure Rita found her way near it. She took it all in good nature. That's Rita.

Jeff Apel

Jeff Apel - January 18, 2017 at 08:05 PM



“ *Sorry to hear this Mike. Praying for you and Patty!*

The Shaver Family!

Thomas Shaver - January 17, 2017 at 07:46 AM

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“ *My condolences to Alecia, Zachary, Whitney. May your remembered days of Mom and Grandmother be good and warm your hearts often. Hugs Aunt Nadine.*



Nadine J.Hooper Schlaich - January 15, 2017 at 01:29 PM



I second that

Misti Hammond - January 15, 2017 at 05:40 PM