



Debra Ann Stocker

April 16, 1959 - January 8, 2026

Debra Ann (Kriha) Stocker, age 66, soared on wings like an eagle into the arms of our Father after finishing her greatest race and winning victory over cancer on January 8, 2026, her ultimate prize being eternal life with God (Isaiah 40:31; 1Corinthians 9:24). She passed peacefully at St. John's Good Samaritan Center with family at her side.

The funeral mass will be held on Friday, January 16, 2026, at 10:00 am at Prince of Peace Catholic Church in Kearney. A visitation will be held the evening prior from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 pm with a Rosary service at 6:00 pm and refreshments to follow. Graveside burial services will take place at 2:00 pm at Hayestown Cemetery in rural Rockville, Nebraska. Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral Service is in charge of arrangements. Memorials are suggested to the family for a later donation to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital during the annual March Radiothon, a mission that Deb found admirable and very worthwhile. She loved children and knew that having cancer could only be worse if it were the experience of a child.

Deb was born in Kearney, Nebraska, on April 16, 1959, to Robert Charles and Joan Gertrude Kriha. She was raised on the family farm southeast of Ravenna and loved by her three younger sisters and three younger brothers. Family was her greatest treasure, and she adored growing up surrounded by many extended family, cousins, and friends.

She graduated from Ravenna High School in 1977 and attended Hastings Technical College where she earned her legal secretary degree in 1979. She was proud to pass her state certification test to be a professional legal secretary in 1981 after working for Nye Hervert Jorgensen & Watson in Kearney. Her children later marveled at her typing speed and her knowledge of shorthand. She had a love for learning new things and was a self-taught master of many skills.

On May 9, 1981, she entered into Holy Matrimony with her husband of 44 years, Kirk William Stocker, at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Ravenna, Nebraska. A devoted wife, she supported Kirk in his 35 year career at the City of Kearney and in the operation of the family farm.

Deb devoted her life to caring for her three daughters: April, Jessica, and Nicole. They have fond memories of trips to the library, Children's Museum, and the mailbox, swimming lessons, and many other activities that Deb attended with them. Most of all, she read them books every night before bed on the big chair in the living room, passing on a love of reading and learning. The daughter of a teacher, she knew and believed education was important. She believed strongly in a Catholic education at Kearney Catholic High School and supported all of the girls' activities from music to sports. She would also support the students, teachers, families and staff at Park Elementary School, serving as the school secretary for 23 years from 2001 until 2024. She loved her job, friends, and kids at Park Elementary.

Deb was an extremely talented and creative seamstress, baker, typist, photographer, secretary, and cake decorator. She worked for Karla's Creations in Holdrege, Morris Press Cookbooks in Kearney, and the Youth Rehabilitation Center in Kearney over the years. She served others so well with her gifts: making matching Christmas outfits for her girls, sewing prom

dresses, crocheting baby blankets, sharing and organizing her photos into dozens of scrapbooks, organizing and running horseshoe tournaments with her family, making peanut butter Krispie bars, later termed “Stocker bars” for her children’s sports teams, and making weekly batches of cookie dough in the summer for snacks. She also decorated hundreds of cakes for birthdays, baptism and other events with everything from bull riders to tractors to Barbie and Frozen princesses for her children, nieces, nephews, and grandchildren. Deb took on any creative challenge just to see young eyes light up on their special day.

Deb was an adventurous sports lover. She kept books and took tickets at many of her children’s games and, later, most activities for Kearney Public Schools. She traveled to Husker volleyball and basketball games and rarely missed a game on TV. She joined cherished friends on trips throughout Nebraska as well as to Boston, Cape Cod, California, Washington, D.C., New York, Alaska, Greece, and Mexico. She painted with contractors on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, kayaked with otters in Monterey Bay, felt an earthquake in the Caribbean, stayed the night in a caboose, and was even detained by White House security.

Deb enjoyed being active and rarely had any down time. She loved walking or biking on the Kearney trails, playing pickleball, attending cousin days, and being present at many activities for her nieces, nephews, and grandchildren. She cherished her eight grandchildren and hosted Grandma Camp every summer: a week full of fun activities designed just for them. They have the memory books she created with her photos of their adventures. They will love and cherish their Grandma forever.

At the end of her life, Deb battled non small cell lung cancer for several years. Her cancer journey only revealed her great faith, resilience, and strength. She

had complete faith and trust in her doctors and in her relationship with God and the Catholic Church. She knew Jesus not only walked by her side but also, at times, carried her during her radiation and chemotherapy treatments and embraced her during her recoveries. Her death is swallowed up in victory. Thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 15:54-57).

Deb is survived by her husband, Kirk Stocker, of Kearney; her daughters and eight grandchildren, April and husband Adam Lambert of Imperial, NE and their children Cadence, Cohen, Leah, Madelynn, and Brynn; Jessica and husband Zach Long of Hallam, NE and their children Perry and Corbin; and Nicole and husband Travis Jurgens of Monterey, California, and their daughter Rowan; her mother, Joan Kriha of Ravenna; her sisters and brothers and their spouses and children who are her beloved nieces and nephews, Teresa and husband Duane Shepherd of Victoria, KS; Linda and husband Steve Fegter of Holdrege, NE and their children Jay, Kellie, and Courtney; Karen and husband Vern Cline of Grand Island, NE and their children Corey, Alysha, Tyler, and Abby; Jim and Joyce Kriha of Ravenna and their children Lisa and Kara; Dan and Kim Kriha of Ravenna; Dale and Lily Kriha of Ravenna and their children Piper, Porter, Payton, Paige, and Parker; and her sisters-in-law and their spouses and children Diane and husband Dennis Basnett of Ravenna and their children Eric, Kelly, and Caelan; Dawn and husband Dominic Reicks of Ravenna and their children Alyssa, Cassie, and Mariah; and Cheryl and husband Reese Shafto of Pleasanton, NE and their children Trey and Tate; and more than thirty great nieces and nephews.

Deb is preceded in death and welcomed into Heaven by her father, Robert Kriha, her father- and mother-in-law, William and Louise Stocker, her brother-in-law, Mike Stocker. Deb's final resting place will be in the Hayestown Cemetery near the Stocker family farm south of Rockville, Nebraska. Graveside burial services will be held after the funeral and luncheon for those

who wish to travel to attend.

Cemetery Details

Hayestown Cemetery

48297 776 Road
Ravenna, NE 68869

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 15. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Prince of Peace Catholic Church
2407 W 56th Street
Kearney, NE 68845

Wake Service

JAN 15. 6:00 PM (CT)

Prince of Peace Catholic Church
2407 W 56th Street
Kearney, NE 68845

Funeral Mass

JAN 16. 10:00 AM (CT)

Prince of Peace Catholic Church
2407 W 56th Street
Kearney, NE 68845

Graveside Service

JAN 16. 2:00 PM (CT)

Hayestown Cemetery
48297 776 Road
Ravenna, NE 68869

Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Father Scott - Homily*



Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services - January 22 at 11:43 AM

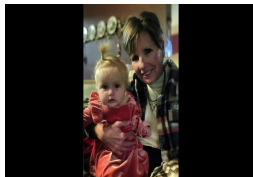


“ *I was a Work Study at Park from 2001-2003 and Deb was always so kind when I came in to work. May your family enjoy the good memories and I pray for comfort in this difficult time.*

Matt - January 16 at 10:22 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memorial Video*



Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services - January 15 at 02:33 PM



God bless you and your family.

Dale Simmons - January 17 at 03:12 PM

CR

“ Many prayers for you & your family. We have such good memories from our times at Emerson School with your lovely daughters.
Cindy, Randy & Rachelle Rademacher

Cindy Rademacher - January 15 at 12:33 PM

LF

“ London & Linsey Foote planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debra Ann Stocker.

London & Linsey Foote - January 15 at 08:51 AM



“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Debra Ann Stocker.



January 15 at 08:51 AM

TF

“ The JURGENS family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debra Ann Stocker.

The JURGENS family - January 14 at 10:10 PM

TF

“ *The JURGENS family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Debra Ann Stocker.*



The JURGENS family - January 14 at 10:10 PM

ET

“ *Everett, Rebecca & Henry Turek purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Debra Ann Stocker.*



Everett, Rebecca & Henry Turek - January 14 at 08:07 PM

TB

“ *Tyler, Alyssa, Emma, Lexi, and Brooks purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Debra Ann Stocker.*



Tyler, Alyssa, Emma, Lexi, and Brooks - January 14 at 06:33 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Debra Ann Stocker.*



January 14 at 06:16 PM

GW

“ Sending condolences to the family of Deb Stocker. May God grant you peace and understanding in your time of grief.

Jayne and Greg Werner

Greg Werner - January 14 at 11:55 AM

TF

“ The Lambert, Mann & Mathis Families purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Debra Ann Stocker.



The Lambert, Mann & Mathis Families - January 14 at 08:44 AM

SV

“ Sharon Vlcek lit a candle in memory of Debra Stocker



Sharon Vlcek - January 13 at 03:21 PM

CI

“ Chesterman Coca-Cola of Grand Island planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debra Ann Stocker.

Chesterman Coca-Cola of Grand Island - January 13 at 12:58 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Debra Ann Stocker.*



January 13 at 12:58 PM



“ *Shannon Breinig, CVI Kearney Secretary planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debra Ann Stocker.*

Shannon Breinig, CVI Kearney Secretary - January 13 at 09:06 AM



“ *Many fond memories of Deb not only at KPS but also 4-H days with our daughters. Hugs and prayers to all of you.*

Darleen M Farwell - January 12 at 07:06 PM



“ *Darleen M Farwell lit a candle in memory of Debra Stocker*



Darleen M Farwell - January 12 at 07:05 PM

SO

“ *Sonny O'Connor lit a candle in memory of Debra Stocker* ”



Sonny O'Connor - January 11 at 02:13 PM