



## Kathleen "Kathy" Arlene Milliner

December 4, 1964 - April 18, 2026

Beloved wife and mother, Kathleen Arlene “Kathy” Milliner only made it to 61 years of age before her big heart had nothing more to give. She passed away on Saturday, 18 April 2026 at a hospital in West Jordan, Salt Lake County, Utah. She was an incredibly kind, empathetic, and generous person, who loved to give everything she could to those in need until the day she died.

Kathy was born on 4 December 1964, in Ekalaka, Carter County, Montana, the oldest child of William Gene Burke and Arlene Lucy Burke née Mix. Kathy had no recollections of what is doubtless a memorable town because her parents moved to the Black Hills of South Dakota when she was a baby to further the nascent career of her father as an educator.

Kathy’s family moved several times in the Black Hills as she grew up. As a child, she lived for significant amounts of time in Terraville and Central City. As she grew, she attended schools in Deadwood and Lead, South Dakota. By that time, her father was a principal and so she always felt pressure to not embarrass him by getting anything but outstanding grades. She regretted that this sometimes caused her to take classes that were easy instead of classes that she had a curiosity about.

While in school, she played the French horn. Lack of positive reinforcement from her band teacher led her to think she was very good at it and so she

stopped playing the French horn when she graduated from high school. This was another decision that she later regretted.

For post-secondary education, Kathy first obtained a Bachelors Degree in Special Education from Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota. She then taught in Cherry Creek, South Dakota on the reservation of the Lakota Sioux for several years. Seeking a change, she went back to school and earned a Masters Degree in Special Education at the University of South Dakota, in Vermillion.

The lure of higher salaries drew Kathy to Nevada. She taught in Beatty, Nye County, Nevada, a job that she had accepted sight unseen. Once she moved there, she found the town to be too isolated and with little to do for fun other than go swimming in nearby Death Valley National Park. So, she moved within the Nye County School District to the school that was nearest to Las Vegas – the school in Pahrump, Nevada. Eventually, she moved to Las Vegas where she sought additional Special Education certifications at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

While living in Las Vegas, Kathy was introduced to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Kathy had grown up a Catholic, but lapsed once her father quit forcing her to go. The teachings of the LDS Church appealed to Kathy and she became a member on 16 December 1994.

Although Kathy only needed one or two more classes to complete her additional teaching credentials, when she learned that she would have to wait a significant amount of time for one of the necessary classes to next be offered, Kathy impatiently decided to move to Salt Lake City. She often wondered what would have happened had she stayed in Nevada and continued her teaching career there. Well, one thing that would not have happened would have been meeting Chad Ralph Milliner, her future husband.

Chad had lived in Utah, California, Arizona, Wyoming, and Australia, but not in Nevada. So things would definitely have worked out differently for her – and for him. Perhaps Kathy would have met a millionaire had she stayed there and lived a life of luxury and ease. But it is certain that Chad's life would not have been as good.

Kathy and Chad met at an LDS congregation for unmarried church members in Salt Lake City. Chad didn't know what hit him. He never talked to people after church services ended, and yet Kathy could get him to talk for so long that they disturbed other people who were trying to use the space.

Chad went to South Dakota at Christmas time to meet Kathy's family. He gave her a gift of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which seemed like a really good idea at the time, but turned out to be a fiasco because, never one to want to spend much time shopping, Chad decided to buy the same gift for several other people that year and Kathy found out.

Somehow, despite Chad's ineptitude, love blossomed. Kathy and Chad got engaged at a Deseret Industries Thrift Store. Chad and Kathy happened to see a bunch of cheap costume jewelry rings there and he somehow knew that that was the ideal time to ask her, "So, how would you like to get a real ring sometime?" Kathy got a real engagement ring shortly thereafter, on Valentines Day.

Kathy and Chad married on 19 June 1999 in the Salt Lake City LDS Temple, the temple in which Kathy was a volunteer worker. They began their married life in an apartment in Salt Lake City proper before moving to Kearns, Utah and later to West Jordan, Utah, both parts of the suburbs of Salt Lake City.

More than anything, Kathy wanted to be a mother. Feeling the biological clock ticking, she sought medical help to get pregnant. Unfortunately, once she

started seeing doctors, she became hooked and continued to see doctors for the rest of her life at an ever-increasing rate. Despite health problems, Kathy eventually became pregnant with twins through invitro fertilization (IVF).

These twins, Nora Kathleen Milliner and Burke Chad Milliner, were born on 12 April 2002 at LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City; however, they were very premature--their gestational ages were only twenty weeks. They lived for a few hours, but that was it. They were too young to survive.

Because of Kathy's worsening health, Kathy and Chad agonized over whether to try again with IVF, or to instead pursue other options to becoming parents, such as adoption. Kathy and Chad briefly became licensed foster parents but decided to not accept any placements. Ultimately, the IVF path was again chosen and again Kathy became pregnant with twins. Gareth Chad Milliner and Janae Lawana Milliner were born on 10 July 2003, again at LDS Hospital. Janae is now known as Jay.

Gareth was born with profound Autism and developmental delays, which led Kathy to focus on her children and their needs instead of resuming her teaching career. Utah's funding for those with disabilities is shameful and Kathy and Chad had to wait a full decade for Gareth to become eligible for state services.

What is absolutely incredible, and part of what made her such a wonderful mother and spouse, is that she did not let her health burdens keep her down for long. She became a competitive power lifter, earning several medals at meets in several states -- and at one point setting a world record for drug-tested women in her age and weight categories. She crocheted; she resumed her earlier interest in music by learning how to play the piano as an adult and singing in choirs; she baked bread from wheat that she ground herself; she cared for cats; she read (when the cats would let her); she gardened; she built jigsaw puzzles (again, when the cats would let her). She did it all.

Late in life, Kathy decided to join the United Methodist Church as a show of support to Jay, who is transgender.

Kathy is survived by her husband, and by Gareth and Jay. She is also survived by a sister, Shannan Elizabeth Burke (of Sturgis, South Dakota), and a brother, James Anthony Burke (of Salem, Oregon), his wife Rebecca Burke née Lundgren, and their daughter Erin Burke (of Monmouth, Oregon). An aunt, Dorothy Burke, resides in Lakewood, Colorado. Four cats still reside in the family home with Chad and Jay. Chad and Jay disagree about whether cats go to heaven.

Preceded in death by Burke and Nora, her parents, and a stillborn sibling, Frances. Also preceded in death by many aunts and uncles. And by several other pets that she loved.

There will be a memorial celebration of Kathy's life and love for everyone at the Methodist church that she attended, Hilltop UMC, on Thursday, 985 E 10600 South, Sandy, Utah, on Thursday, 23 April 2026 at 6 pm. The funeral will be at the LDS Church at 8950 S 1300 West, West Jordan, Utah, on Friday, 24 April 2026 at 11 am, and will be preceded by a viewing there at 9:30 am. Burial will take place at the cemetery in Marion, Summit County, Utah (near Kamas) at 1:00 pm.

Kathy loved flowers, so go ahead, if you are so inclined. So that they are at their freshest, please arrange for any such flowers to be delivered to the LDS church between 8:30 and 9:30 on Friday morning. Any flowers that have to be delivered before Friday can be brought to Serenity Funeral Home, 13863 S 2700 West, Bluffdale, Utah.

It is equally fine if you don't give flowers. Instead, just share your thoughts and

memories of Kathy at <https://www.serenityfhs.com>. The family thanks everyone who has done so much to get everything arranged in such a short amount of time, as well as the doctors, nurses, and paramedics who tried their best.

# Cemetery Details

## Marion City Cemetery

711 E 2700 N  
Marion, UT

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

APR **23**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (MT)

Hilltop United Methodist Church  
985 East 10600 South  
Sandy, UT 84094

## Viewing

APR **24**. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (MT)

River Oaks 6th Ward  
8950 South 1300 West  
West Jordan, UT 84088

## Family Service

APR **24**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (MT)

River Oaks 6th Ward  
8950 South 1300 West  
West Jordan, UT 84088

## Graveside Service

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APR **24**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

Marion City Cemetery  
711 E 2700 N  
Marion, UT