



Judith K. Merkle

March 23, 1945 - September 21, 2025

Judith Kay Merkle, age 80 of Highland, IL, died Sunday, September 21, 2025, at Cedarhurst in Highland, IL.

Judy was born on March 23, 1945, in St. Louis, Missouri, to Milton and Vada (Eardley) Prange, and grew up in St. Jacob, Illinois. She graduated from Triad High School in 1963 and that same year married the love of her life, Waldo J. “Bud” Merkle, at Hope Lutheran Church in Highland. Their nearly five decades together were filled with laughter, devotion, and countless adventures, until Bud’s passing in 2012.

A woman of grace and quiet strength, Judy balanced devotion to her family with a successful career in banking. After raising her children, she returned to the banking industry at State Bank of St. Jacob in 1977, where she worked with integrity and care until retiring in 2010 as Vice President. She was admired for her steady presence, professionalism, and genuine kindness toward colleagues and customers alike.

Judy and Bud shared a love of travel, creating cherished memories on cruises to Alaska, the Panama Canal, New Zealand, Australia, and the Caribbean. At home, she found joy in life’s simple pleasures—walking her faithful dog Cookie, gathering with her close-knit circle of friends affectionately known as the “Golden Girls,” and sharing meals, laughter, and shopping trips with them. Above all, Judy treasured time with her family. She was the heart of every gathering—gentle, generous, and endlessly supportive. To her children, she

was a steady guide; to her grandchildren, a source of unconditional love; and to her in-laws, the “best mother-in-law you could ask for.”

Her faith was a cornerstone of her life. A lifelong member of Hope Lutheran Church, Judy carried her beliefs quietly but firmly, embodying compassion, humility, and a servant’s heart. She gave selflessly, listened deeply, and made everyone feel valued and loved.

Survivors include:

Daughter - Diane R. (Ronnie) Gilomen, Highland, IL

Daughter - Monica L. (Daniel) Hurford, Edwardsville, IL

Son - John W. (Stephanie) Merkle, Bloomington, IL

Daughter - Kimberly S. (Michael) Marchal, Highland, IL

Daughter - Dr. Stephanie L. Bosslet, M.D, Highland, IL

Grandchild - Joshua D. (Meghan) Hurford, Edwardsville, IL

Grandchild - Megan L. Hurford (Husband: Alex Francois), New York, NY

Grandchild - Briana M. (Brandon) Saunchegraw, Baldwin, MO

Grandchild - Brett G. Gilomen (fiancée-Mallory Rutz), Pocahontas, IL

Grandchild - Garrett J. (Anna) Merkle, Bloomington, IL

Grandchild - Claire S. Marchal (significant other- Justin Bruggemann), Highland, IL

Grandchild - Clay W. Merkle (fiancée-Ella Metzger), Bloomington, IL

Grandchild - SSgt. Jackson N. Marchal, USAF, Highland, IL

Great Grandchild - Avery S. Merkle

Great Grandchild - Whitney R. Hurford

Great Grandchild - Baker G. Saunchegraw

Great Grandchild - Sophia R. Hurford

Great Grandchild - Patrick J. Merkle

She was preceded in death by:

Husband - Waldo J. "Bud" Merkle, died 1/1/2012

Father - Milton Henry Prange, died 9/3/1982

Mother - Vada Mae Prange (nee Eardley), died 4/11/1991

Brother - Thomas M. Prange, died 5/29/2017

Arrangements are being handled by Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home in Highland, IL.

Visitation will be held from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM on Friday, September 26, 2025, at Hope Lutheran Church in Highland, IL.

Funeral Service will be at 11:00 AM on Friday, September 26, 2025, at Hope Lutheran Church in Highland, IL, with Rev. Scott Busacker, Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church, officiating.

Interment will be at Highland City Cemetery in Highland, IL.

Memorial contributions may be made to Hope Lutheran Church.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **26.** 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Hope Lutheran Church
2745 Broadway
Highland, IL 62249-2431
(618) 654-7891

Funeral Service

SEP **26.** 11:00 AM (CT)

Hope Lutheran Church
2745 Broadway
Highland, IL 62249-2431
(618) 654-7891

Tribute Wall

JL

“ Judy was one of the nicest, friendly ladies at State Bank. It was always a pleasure to run into her.

Janet Lang - September 28, 2025 at 09:12 PM

JH

“ Judy was such a kind soul. She added much to our "Ladies Let's Do Lunch" group. She was such a nice person to spend time with. Prayers for comfort and peace. Rest in Peace, Judy...



Jody Harrison - September 25, 2025 at 09:00 PM

SR

“ Judy was an inspiration and comfort to everyone who new her. Her loving, caring and compassionate demeanor radiated where ever she was. She always strived to reflect a Christ like disposition. She was always a joy to be around. What few group vacations Don and I had to spend with Bud and Judy was a memory made.



Soundra Rinderer - September 25, 2025 at 03:45 PM

RM

“ Rob Driemeyer, Julio Montalvo purchased the Se rene Retreat for the family of Judith K. Merkle.



Rob Driemeyer, Julio Montalvo - September 25, 2025 at 11:11 AM

RM

“ Rob Driemeyer, Julio Montalvo planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Judith K. Merkle.

Rob Driemeyer, Julio Montalvo - September 25, 2025 at 11:11 AM

BS

“ Judy was a kind & wonderful lady. Sending sincere sympathy to all of her family 🙏🙏

Bob & Beckie Schrupf - September 25, 2025 at 10:52 AM

BS

“ Becky, Claryssa & Stacy purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Judith K. Merkle.



Becky, Claryssa & Stacy - September 25, 2025 at 09:38 AM

DK

“ Dennis Trish and kids purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Judith K. Merkle.



Dennis Trish and kids - September 24, 2025 at 06:36 AM

DK

“ Dennis Trish and kids planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Judith K. Merkle.

Dennis Trish and kids - September 24, 2025 at 06:36 AM

JH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Judy Hartlieb - September 23, 2025 at 03:45 PM



One of many Golden Girls trips that we took over the years. The first one was in 2003 to NYC; this picture was on the beach near Hilton Head, or Savannah, GA, or Kiawah Island, SC!

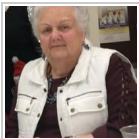
Judy Hartlieb - September 23, 2025 at 03:50 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Judith K. Merkle.



September 23, 2025 at 03:32 PM



“ Rita Rinderer lit a candle in memory of Judith Merkle



Rita Rinderer - September 23, 2025 at 03:14 PM