

Martin and Marilyn Fraga

Marilyn (Sohn) Fraga

Marilyn was born in Marlette Michigan in 1935.

Marilyn's parents, Doris and Roy Sohn, were farmers who had five children. Roy died an untimely death when Marilyn was 5 years old. It was a difficult time financially and emotionally for the family. Doris was left to raise five children without her husband and his income during a time when many women did not work outside the home. To get by, Doris and her young family relied on help from their extended family and the generosity of their neighbors.

Marilyn's mother remarried a very kind and hardworking man, Harry Willer. He treated Doris's children as his own. They went on to have three children and their combined family was one full of love and respect for one another. The family was raised in a religious home, with daily prayer and devotion, who attended the Methodist Church in Brown City.

Marilyn worked on her parents' dairy farm and shared stories of rising early to milk the cows. After she graduated high-school, Marilyn worked at the Pickle factory in Imlay City. Her sister, Helen, described Marilyn as a red-hair teenager with a feisty disposition who liked to wear her jeans rolled up, a white shirt, a scarf around her neck and saddle shoes. Helen, eight years younger, said she was bossed around quite a bit by her older sister.

Marilyn's feisty spirit and humor made her fun to be with. She was an honest woman who loved to be around genuine people. This is why she loved her time with the Fragas. She was a favorite with her nieces and nephews.

Marilyn had a brain aneurysm in 1989 and underwent a 10-hour brain surgery. After the surgery, she was paralyzed on one side of her body. She went through one year of rehab – learning how to walk again and regaining her ability to swallow, all with the help of her coach, her daughter Dawn.

Marilyn always had a love for God in her heart and spirit. She liked attending churches that sang modern worship music, raising her hands in praise. Her grandchildren have fond memories of grandma driving them in her Mustang, with Aretha Franklin gospel music blaring. She loved spending time with her grandchildren.

Marilyn never got over Martin's sudden death, which left Marilyn with overwhelming grief and sadness. She kept a diary in which she wrote daily about how much she missed and loved Martin and asked God to help her. Edwin, her son the artist, created a beautiful piece of work incorporating her diary as a tribute to Marilyn and Martin's deep love for one another and their family.

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In later years, Marilyn worked part time as a recess monitor at Keller Elementary School. She enjoyed being around the kids and would laugh about giving the troublemakers a time-out on the playground.

Marilyn's health declined and, after suffering a stroke, she passed away January 25, 2011, at the age of 75. She was laid to rest next to our father, Martin, on a snowy day in a hilltop cemetery in Imlay City. Our Dad made the decision shortly before his death to be buried in Imlay City because it was there, he had his fondest memories. He hoped that when his children would come to pay respect, we may get a glimpse of a beautiful sunset over the beet fields where he and Marilyn grew up, married and had a family.

Provided by their children, February 2023