



Shirley Anne Houtman

April 13, 1937 - April 13, 2025

Shirley Anne (Meiste) Houtman was a beloved wife, mother, and grandmother. She died in Holland, Michigan on her birthday, April 13, 2025, at the age of 88.

Shirley was born in Holland in 1937, the daughter of Evert and Sena Meiste, the youngest of seven children. She graduated from Hope College in 1959 with a degree in education.

She often shared the story of meeting her husband Paul on a blind date in Ann Arbor where she was teaching and Paul was finishing his degree. Their first date was a canoeing excursion organized by mutual friends, and it went well. They were married for 63 years and raised four children together.

Shirley spent much of her adult life as a teacher of young children, first in Ann Arbor and later in Kalamazoo. She retired from the YMCA in Kalamazoo, where she was a Montessori kindergarten teacher.

Shirley lived in Kalamazoo for 50 years, before she and Paul moved to Holland in 2013. She was an engaged member of North Park Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, and later Pillar Church in Holland.

Shirley was a faithful wife, mother, and grandmother. She enjoyed traveling with Paul during their retirement years and was frequently involved in

volunteering and mission trips. She enjoyed reading and gardening, and she passed her love of both down to various children and grandchildren. Family members also recall her enjoyment of birding, which inspired some of their travels and lots of teaching about birds to her grandchildren.

Her family has grieved her loss gradually over a period of many years, as dementia took her away from them little by little. Despite her difficulty in remembering details during her later years, she continued to offer a gracious spirit and kind conversation until her very last days. Her best days in the past year have been when her grandchildren and great grandchildren visited. She will be missed and fondly remembered by her family and friends.

Shirley is survived by her husband, Paul Houtman; daughter, Lynda (Bill Troutman) Gravier; daughter, Carmen (Steve) Berens; daughter, Sarah (Alan) Karkosh; son, Bryan (Heather) Houtman; 11 grandchildren: Anna Gravier (Matthew) Symmes, Kevin Gravier, Molly Gravier, Amanda Teske, Morgan Teske, Tyler Berens, Kyle Karkosh, Shane Karkosh, Alison (Daniel) Callahan, Kennedy (Jeremy) Hill, and Ryan Houtman; as well as three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 10:00 am on Saturday, April 26, 2025, at Langeland-Sterenbergh, 315 E. 16th St. Holland, MI 49423.

Memorial contributions in Shirley's honor may be given to Hospice of Holland, at <https://www.hollandhospice.org/ways-to-give/> or by mail to Hospice of Holland, Inc.

270 Hoover Blvd, Holland, MI 49423.

www.langelandsterenbergh.com

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **26**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Langeland-Sterenbergh Funeral Home
315 East 16th Street
Holland, MI 49423

Tribute Wall



“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Shirley Anne Houtman*



Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes - April 24, 2025 at 09:37 AM



“ *Paul and Shirley were our neighbors for several years at East Point Ridge. Shirley was a wonderful person, she will be sorely missed. Many condolences to the Houtman family.*

Tracy Miller - May 04, 2025 at 06:00 PM

DD

“ My name is David DeVries and I was in Mrs. Houtman's 4th grade class, 1961-62, the one year that she taught at North Christian School in Kalamazoo. Now, at 72, I still have memories of the year I experienced as a nine-year-old student. One in particular was our field trip to Kellogg's in Battle Creek that Mrs. Houtman arranged. This was near the end of the school year, probably in late May. Part of the day involved a picnic lunch in one of the city parks. Since she was pregnant, she told us before we left that if there was any water in the park, we were not to go within 50 feet of it because "I'm in no condition to jump in and save anybody." It was a wonderful day. Good weather and a nice tour, with treats at the end. Another memory I have is when she brought in the record (yes, vinyl) of songs from "The Sound of Music" and had us sing along with it. The musical was not that old and the movie wouldn't be released for another few years. So now, every time I hear "Do-Re-Mi" or "My Favorite Things" I think of my time in the class of Mrs. Shirley Houtman. Her influence in many ways is still felt these 63 years later. I pray for comfort for the Houtman family. God bless you.

David DeVries - April 26, 2025 at 02:14 PM

LY

David, thank you for sharing your remembrances of our mom. She was pregnant with me during that field trip! I often wonder about what she was like as a teacher, so I really appreciate your insights. She was wonderful with my children as they were growing up!

Lynda - April 30, 2025 at 10:37 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Shirley Anne Houtman.



April 23, 2025 at 01:26 PM

HB

“ Went from Longfellow to Hope with Shirley-- she was part of "the gang" in high school, also a roommate for a year and a sorority sister at Hope.

I never heard a cross or mean word escape her mouth. She was a dear

friend and a lovely woman. The photo you chose is perfect.

my sympathy to all of you, Helen (Wade) Beuker

helen beuker - April 23, 2025 at 09:51 AM

WF

“ With love from the Jack Houtman family. purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Shirley Anne Houtman.



With love from the Jack Houtman family. - April 22, 2025 at 04:34 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Shirley Anne Houtman.

April 22, 2025 at 09:50 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Shirley Anne Houtman.*



April 22, 2025 at 09:50 AM



“ *Doug, Jan and family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Shirley Anne Houtman.*



Doug, Jan and family - April 20, 2025 at 08:21 AM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Shirley Anne Houtman.*



April 17, 2025 at 07:37 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Shirley Anne Houtman.*

April 17, 2025 at 07:37 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Shirley Anne Houtman.*

April 17, 2025 at 11:21 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Shirley Anne Houtman.



April 17, 2025 at 11:21 AM