



Valerie Kay Yodhes

November 13, 1937 - April 21, 2026

Valerie Kay Yodhes, 88, of Holland, Michigan and formerly of Detroit, West Bloomfield, Allen Park, and Ann Arbor, died Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at The Inn at Freedom Village in Holland.

Born in Highland Park, MI, November 13, 1937, Val spent her first 12 years in the city of Detroit before moving to Walnut Lake in West Bloomfield. She graduated from Birmingham High School in 1955. Val met her husband, John, in Ferndale in 1959. They were married at First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham on July 1, 1960.

The first in her family to attend college, Valerie earned a degree in education from Wayne State University and devoted her career to teaching and early childhood education. She directed the preschool program at Allen Park Presbyterian Church, where she made a lasting impact on many children and families.

In retirement, Val and John moved to Ann Arbor, where they enjoyed sporting events, concerts, lectures, and plays, and were active members of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor. They registered student voters on campus and worked the polls during each election. Val developed a strong interest in genealogy. A lifelong fan of jazz, she was a regular listener to WEMU. She loved a good sale, used coupons faithfully, and enjoyed Zentangle.

Val was a laugher. She watched Saturday Night Live from its debut in 1975. She enjoyed games—especially Monopoly, Scrabble, and the Family Wordle text thread—and she liked to win. Asked about regrets, she said, “Well, I guess I could be bossy.”

Her greatest joy was being a grandmother to Ian and Caroline. She spent as much time with them as she could—making crafts, taking them on outings and overnights, showing up for their activities, sports, and college events, and keeping up with their lives as adults.

In later years, John and Val moved to Holland to be closer to family and spent the past five years attending Hope Church. Her faith remained a central part of her life. Val lived life on her own terms. And she accepted the end of her life with peace and gratitude for the long, healthy, and independent years she and John shared.

Valerie was preceded in death by her parents, Donald and Geraldine (Balsley) Benway; her brother, Howard Benway; and her son, David Yodhes.

She is survived by her husband of 66 years, John Yodhes; her daughter, Ann (James) McKnight; and her grandchildren, Ian and Caroline McKnight.

The family is planning a private service.

Arrangements are by Langeland-Sterenbergh Funeral Home and condolences may be left online at www.langelandsterenbergh.com

Tribute Wall



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Valerie Kay Yodhes.*



April 28 at 07:28 PM



“ *Aunt Valerie fueled my love of ancestry and helped connect me to my family roots. She was a cheerleader in my life and followed my career from my radio days through my time teaching and starting my PhD. Her love of lifelong learning had inspired me in so many ways.*

Bridget Smith-Botos - April 28 at 07:08 PM



“ *Sending loving light, energy and prayer to your entire family, Anne. Thinking of you.*

*Peace and comfort~
Paula Fabiano*

Paula Mary Fabiano - April 28 at 07:30 AM



“ *to the family, Dick Halsey events. We never saw her without that beautiful smile. Thinking of the family ,, Bill and Sally Halsey*

sally halsey - April 27 at 11:44 PM

ST

“ My heart goes out to Val’s loved ones. She was a strong and yet gentle person. Her daughter Ann is like that, too. I enjoyed her laugh and her beautiful speaking voice. She was a lovely person. Someone you would entrust with the care of your precious child. Someone you would be comfortable vacationing with for a lifetime. I count her and her family as my own family.

Sally Halsey Thompson - April 27 at 10:28 PM

DH

Congratulations to all of us who were lucky enough to know Val. Our lives were richer for the experience

dick halsey - April 29 at 01:30 PM