



Carol Bruder-Hoekstra

December 29, 1936 - October 25, 2025

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Carol Bruder-Hoekstra died peacefully on the morning of October 25, 2025, surrounded by love and family. She was born on December 29, 1936, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Thelma (Foster) and Wilfred Courier.

Carol was preceded in death by her parents; her sisters, Billie (Lorraine) Schalla and Joan Wiley; brothers-in-law, Gordon and Bob; and her beloved husbands, Martin “Marty” Bruder and Barrett “Bart” Hoekstra. She is survived by her devoted daughters, Laura Hawkins (John), Christine Bruder (Greg Lawson), and Susan Schmit; six cherished grandchildren and their spouses and partners; and five great-grandchildren who brought her endless joy. Carol grew up in the same cozy home on 103rd and Hampton in Milwaukee, where she shared a bedroom—and countless memories—with her sisters. As a teenager, she loved roller skating, attending dances with friends and according to her oldest sister “boys, boys, boys”. She graduated from Custer High School.

Carol met her first husband, Marty, shortly after he returned home from military service in Europe. The two quickly fell in love and eloped in November 1956. They welcomed their first daughter, Laura, in 1957, followed by Christine and their youngest, Susan. Together they built a life in Milwaukee, Brown Deer and West Bend. Carol was a devoted wife and mother, who loved her gardens and enjoyed raising their children. During those years she was active in the League of Women Voters and President of the PTA. She also worked as a door-to-door market researcher with her dear friend Ginny—a job that brought her plenty of laughter and stories she loved to share.

The family moved to West Bend, where Carol began working as a pharmacy tech. at the West Bend Clinic. She also began to take a passionate interest in tennis and became quite accomplished. After their daughters graduated high school, she and Martin fulfilled a dream by building a home on Big Cedar Lake, where they lived from 1979 until 1986 before returning to West Bend.

Following Martin’s death in 1996, Carol continued working as a realtor with Wauwatosa Realty, where she helped countless families find their homes in the West Bend area. In 1997, she married Barrett “Bart” Hoekstra, and together they lived in Sheboygan before

relocating to Cape Canaveral, Florida. After Bart's death in 2000, Carol returned to Wisconsin, settling once again in West Bend.

Carol continued her work as a realtor and later joined the West Bend Housing Authority, where she took great pride in helping individuals and families find affordable housing. In 2021, she moved to Fond du Lac to be closer to family. After suffering a stroke in 2022, she spent her remaining years at Crossroads Nursing Home, where she was cared for with kindness and compassion.

Carol lived a rich and full life marked by curiosity, strength, and grace. She loved the ocean, good friends, a strong Old Fashioned, shopping and a great movie. She also enjoyed traveling across the U.S. and Europe. Carol was her family's biggest cheerleader, present at every performance, sporting event, and milestone, always cheering louder than anyone else, with such pride in her eyes.

She will be remembered for her warmth, humor, the comfort of her hugs, the love for her kitties and her wrinkle free skin. One of the gifts we will always cherish are her handmade quilts. Each grandchild and great-grandchild received a handmade quilt at birth, stitched with love and care, making every child feel cared for and treasured.

Her family takes comfort in knowing that she lived fully, loved deeply, and left a legacy of strength and kindness that touched everyone who knew her.

Tribute Wall

SF

“ I met Carol when we were selling real estate at the same time. We did have some fun times! One thing she always did was enjoy life. Rest in peace Carol.

Sherry Fechter - November 03, 2025 at 09:14 AM

CB

“ My fondest memories were walking the beach at her beloved ocean for miles and discussing everything under the sun when she lived in Cape Canaveral. My godmother, rest peacefully. Carol

Carol Ball - October 31, 2025 at 06:40 PM

AD

“ Ann Derge lit a candle in memory of Carol Bruder-Hoekstra



Ann Derge - October 30, 2025 at 01:42 PM