



Mary Franke

August 12, 1931 - March 10, 2026

Mary Leanora Franke went home to be with the Lord on March 10, 2026.

Mary was born August 12, 1931, to Ralph W. Schnepf and Annie M. Gerstenberger in Manchester, Iowa. She was raised in Hazelton, Iowa, and graduated in 1949. She excelled in academics, music, basketball, and was the class valedictorian. After graduation, she attended the Iowa State Teachers College in Cedar Falls where she earned her two-year teaching degree. Her first teaching job was teaching K-12 students in a one-room schoolhouse. She continued teaching piano, organ and accordion lessons for many years.

Mary married James Franke of New Hampton on June 1, 1956, in Delhi, Iowa. Together, they farmed near New Hampton for 25 years and raised twelve children. They later divorced. Mary then restarted her teaching career, received her four-year degree and worked toward her master's degree from the University of Northern Iowa while working full time. She had a twenty-year career as a Special Education teacher at Dike-New Hartford, retiring at age 72.

Mary lived life to the fullest after retirement. She loved to travel and took numerous trips to visit family Stateside as well as several overseas trips and cruises. She was a member of craft club, garden club, bridge club, St. Patrick Catholic Church, Rosary, and book club.

Mary was devoted to her family, students and church. She never missed Sunday mass and was often found praying novenas and the Rosary for her children. She loved to watch sports and never missed her grandchildren's sporting events and activities. Even when she was unable to attend, she watched via the internet.

In her last few years, Mary moved in with her daughter, Joan, where Mary's family cared for her. She loved being on the farm and watching all the activity. She appreciated her many visitors and enjoyed having people around her.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, brother-in-law, Bill Boesen, brother and sister-in-law, Bob and Edna Franke, nephew Tom Boesen, son-in-law Kenneth Eggena and her special friend, Arnold Freitag.

Mary is survived by her twelve children; Sue (Steve) Clark of Cannon Falls, MN, Carolyn Loudon (Wayne Sutcliffe) of Keosauqua, IA, Janet (Kevin) Bane of Maxwell, IA, Daniel (Penny) Franke of Janesville, IA, Gary (Carole) Franke of Camarillo, CA, Connie (Ricky) Burks of Janesville, IA, Mary (Russ) Dalke of Castle Rock, CO, Judy (Mike) Lacy of Polk City, IA, Joan (Late Kenneth Eggena) of Cedar Falls, IA, Diana (Daniel) Kueter of Delaware, OH, Brian (Tammy) Franke of Dallas Center, IA, Barbara Lorenzen of Clive, IA and numerous grandchildren, step-grandchildren and two great-grandsons; a sister, Beverley Boesen of Waterloo, IA; and six nephews.

We want to thank everyone for their kindness, visits, and overwhelming love for her. A special thank you to the wonderful, caring, women at Unity Point Hospice and Father Ivan Nienhaus of St. Patrick Catholic Church.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:00 a.m. Friday, March 13, 2026, at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Cedar Falls. Visitation will be 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 12th at Richardson Funeral Service in Cedar Falls with a rosary at 3:45 p.m. and vigil at 7:00 p.m. Burial will take place at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Waterloo.

One of Mary's favorite songs was by Barry Manilow, "I Can't Smile Without You". We will smile with memories of her until we meet again.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Olivet Cemetery

4th and San Marnan
Waterloo, IA 50701

Previous Events

Rosary

MAR 12. 3:45 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Richardson Funeral Service
615 Main Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 266-3525
richardsonfuneralservice@gmail.com
<http://richardson.funeralplan2.com>

Visitation

MAR 12. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Richardson Funeral Service
615 Main Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 266-3525
richardsonfuneralservice@gmail.com
<http://richardson.funeralplan2.com>

Vigil

MAR 12. 7:00 PM (CT)

Richardson Funeral Service
615 Main Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 266-3525
richardsonfuneralservice@gmail.com
<http://richardson.funeralplan2.com>

Mass of Christian Burial

MAR 13. 10:00 AM (CT)

Saint Patrick Catholic Church
705 Main St
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Visitation one hour prior.

Tribute Wall

DP

“ It is March 14th. I just read about Mary's passing. She was never old. So many years ago she gave organ lessons to me at Keiser Music in Charles City. then as the years passed, she gave my daughter piano lessons and also my son. He wasn't as interested. I think of her so often and what she gave to me and my family. The last time that I so her was at a ballgame with my grandson and one of her grandsons. I am so sorry for your loss. Sue Ann gave the lessons for a time. with much sympathy, Donna Pierce, Nashua, iowa

Donna Pierce - March 14 at 06:49 PM

LS

“ Love, Haley & Zach Smith purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mary Franke.



Love, Haley & Zach Smith - March 14 at 10:27 AM

SM

“ Steve & Lisa McDermott purchased the Garden Accent Stone - "Our Family Chain Is Broken" for the family of Mary Franke.



Steve & Lisa McDermott - March 13 at 12:13 AM

SS

“ Sending our deepest sympathies!! Stephen and Shelley Stalder ☐ 🙏💙



Stephen and Shelley Stalder - March 12 at 07:36 PM

DN

“ Dan & Geri Novak purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Mary Franke.



Dan & Geri Novak - March 12 at 11:26 AM

KE

“ My sympathy and prayers to all Mary's family. I was their bus driver for some of the family. I think it was Brian come running to the bus and fell down and got his jeans duty. So I left him go back in the house to change. What a lovely family.



Karen Ellsworth - March 12 at 01:09 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Franke.



March 11 at 09:57 PM

KW

“ I am saddened to learn of Mary’s passing. She was one wonderful woman who loved her family deeply. I always enjoyed our conversations (both at the AEA and outside of work). She was a woman of great faith. May memories bring you comfort and may God grant you peace in the coming days. With deepest sympathy

Kerri Wilson - March 11 at 02:44 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Mary Franke.



March 11 at 02:07 PM



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

March 11 at 02:07 PM



“ *Crystal Cross Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Mary Franke.



March 11 at 11:07 AM

JW

“ *Jerrie and Mel Weith planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Franke.*

Jerrie and Mel Weith - March 11 at 10:18 AM

JW

“ *Jerrie and Mel Weith purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mary Franke.*



Jerrie and Mel Weith - March 11 at 10:18 AM

BV

“ *I am so sorry to hear of Mary's passing. My sympathy and prayers to the family. I have many great memories of playing accordion in my first band, The Frankie Combo. Deepest sympathy, Beverly Valvoda*



Beverly Valvoda - March 11 at 10:05 AM

TC

“ *Tracy, Karie, Michelle and Christine purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Mary Franke.*



Tracy, Karie, Michelle and Christine - March 10 at 11:03 PM

KF

“ Kari Wright & Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mary Franke.



Kari Wright & Family - March 10 at 10:39 PM

KF

“ Kari Wright & Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Franke.

Kari Wright & Family - March 10 at 10:39 PM

KW

“ Dear Mary,

You were like a mother to me, and I am so grateful that I had the chance to see you in 2024. I treasure all the time we spent together with Jennifer, Matthew, Daniel, and me in Kansas and Iowa. You were always so welcoming and loving to both me and the children.

I look forward to seeing you again in Heaven. When you reach your final home there, please tell Matthew how much I love and miss him.

May you rest in the arms of our Savior, Jesus. In this I pray, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Love and peace forever,
Kari Wright*



Kari Wright - March 10 at 10:16 PM

SF

“ Steve & Donna (Eggena) Shriver & family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Franke.

Steve & Donna (Eggena) Shriver & family - March 10 at 10:08 PM

SF

“ Steve & Donna (Eggena) Shriver & family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Mary Franke.



Steve & Donna (Eggena) Shriver & family - March 10 at 10:08 PM

MR

“ Mary (Herrick) Radloff planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Franke.

Mary (Herrick) Radloff - March 10 at 08:43 PM

MR

“ Mary (Herrick) Radloff purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Mary Franke.



Mary (Herrick) Radloff - March 10 at 08:43 PM

KL

“ Kallie, Judd, Katy & Jack Loutsch planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Franke.

Kallie, Judd, Katy & Jack Loutsch - March 10 at 08:13 PM

KL

“ Kallie, Judd, Katy & Jack Loutsch purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mary Franke.



Kallie, Judd, Katy & Jack Loutsch - March 10 at 08:13 PM



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

March 10 at 08:07 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mary Franke.



March 10 at 08:07 PM

GD

“ *Gina and Brian Dunn purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of Mary Franke.*



Gina and Brian Dunn - March 10 at 07:45 PM

BA

“ *Deepest sympathies to the entire Franke family. You all lived not far from my family years back. Mary played organ for my parents' wedding and my Dad was in a band with her for a period of time. Hold each other close.*

Brian Arnold - March 10 at 05:42 PM

DT

“ *Des Moines Team purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mary Franke.*



Des Moines Team - March 10 at 05:18 PM