

Darla Reif Atsma
High School Reading Teacher and Sponsor of Cheerleaders and Pom-Pom
September 19, 1963 – December 30, 2022

Darla Atsma, 59, of Dolton, SD, peacefully passed away on December 30, 2022, in Louie's arms, after a lifelong battle with kidney disease. Funeral Mass will be held at 10:30 am on Friday, January 6, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Salem. Visitation with family present will begin at 5 pm on Thursday, with a rosary and prayer service at 7 pm, all at Kinzley Funeral Home in Salem.

Darla was born on September 19, 1963, to Roger and Janet Reif of Salem, SD. After Darla graduated from Salem High School, she continued her education and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Secondary Deaf Education at Northern State University and Augustana University. After graduation, Darla taught English/Reading at Nebraska School for the Deaf in Omaha, NE. Darla was passionate about teaching and signing for the deaf and loved what she did for a living, and she subcontracted as a Certified Interpreter Level 3. Her deaf brother, Troy, was her inspiration in pursuing deaf education.

In 1989, Darla met Louie Atsma at a restaurant with a group of friends in Sioux Falls. Darla and Louie married in 1990. They rented and lived on a farm outside Luverne, MN, for one year, but they both had a dream of owning their own dairy business. They were able to secure a dairy farm south of Dolton, SD. They had a successful dairy and beef cattle operation for 30 years. Until recently, Darla continued interpreting for the deaf, worked at the School for the Blind in Mitchell, and handled the books for the farm.

Darla loved vegetable and flower gardening, cooking, sewing, taking care of the yard, and tending to her pets. There was a distinction between the farm pets and Darla's favorite pets. Darla was a member of Catholic churches in each of the locations she lived and most recently in Bridgewater and Salem. She was passionate about her faith and recruited family members to the Sacraments. Darla and Louie enjoyed many mini vacations to visit relatives in MN, WI, OR, SD, and CO and local points of interest throughout the Midwest. Many an evening they enjoyed a country motorcycle ride.

Darla is survived by her husband, Louie Atsma of Dolton, SD; mother, Janet Reif of Salem, SD; brothers, Todd (Mary) Reif of Sturgis, SD and Troy (friend Rhonda Ofstad) Reif of Sioux Falls, SD; parents-in-law Gerben & Anna Atsma of Silverton, OR along with many brothers/sisters in law, nieces, nephews and cousins. Darla was predeceased by her father, Roger; grandparents Ray & Rose Reif, Martin & Alice Wingen; and infant siblings Wayne, Denise, and Beth Ann.

NEBRASKA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION