



Denise Lenore Cruickshank

September 15, 1954 - March 27, 2026

“ Denise Lenore Cruickshank (née Patch), affectionately known as DC, Dee, and “Little Dee-Dee,” age 71, of Holly, Michigan, passed away on March 27, 2026. She was born September 15, 1954, in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to Leonard Lyle Patch and Evelyn Grace (Campbell) Patch.

Denise is survived by her children, Julie Anne and David Michael, Jr. (Kelley Ann); her grandchildren, Anna Lebourdais, Emily Grace (Jon), Meadow Lynn, and Harper Rose; and her great-grandchildren, Spencer Steven and Gracelyn K. She is also survived by her siblings Evelyn Ales, Larry Patch, and Lorne Patch. She was preceded in death by her grandson, Brett Alexander (2001); her brothers Leonard and Louis; and her parents.

Denise lived a life that didn't fit neatly into categories—and she wouldn't have wanted it to.

She was strong, independent, and tough as nails when she needed to be. Her work as a nurse's aide at Northville Psychiatric Hospital, a Michigan State Park Ranger, and a Corrections Officer speaks to that strength. She handled life head-on.

But underneath that toughness was someone deeply caring, endlessly social, and full of life. Denise was a true people person—a social butterfly who could

turn strangers into conversations and conversations into connections.

She loved music, animals, and the simple joy of being around the people she cared about. She had a soft spot for animals, especially the ones that needed help, and spent time caring for strays and wildlife whenever she could.

Denise was known for her humor, her quick wit, and her ability to find light even in tough moments. She said “I love you” often, and she meant it. She believed in giving people a fair chance, and she taught her family how to keep going—even when life wasn’t easy—by smiling through the rain.

She also carried a few legendary claims, including her lifelong insistence that she was the world’s first female gas station attendant. Whether fact or folklore, it was part of what made her unmistakably Denise.

She will be remembered for her laughter, her personality, her love of animal print, and the way she showed up for people.

Above all, her greatest legacy is the love she gave her grandchildren. In the last years of her life, nothing mattered more to her than the time she spent with them and the love they shared in return. That bond is what will carry her forward.

If there’s any comfort in imagining her now, it might be this—she’s finally on that island she always talked about.

Denise will be cremated prior to the visitation. Burial will take place later this summer at Lakeside Cemetery in Holly, Michigan.

Visitation will be held Tuesday, April 7, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at Dryer Funeral Home in Holly, Michigan. In lieu of flowers, donations may be

made to a local animal shelter in her honor. She would have saved every animal if she could.”

Cemetery Details

Lakeside Cemetery

Holly, MI

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR 7. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Dryer Funeral Home
101 First St
Holly, MI 48442
(248) 634-8291

Tribute Wall



“ *Ellen Williams purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Denise Lenore Cruickshank.*



Ellen Williams - April 01 at 09:11 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Denise Lenore Cruickshank.*



March 31 at 12:57 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Denise Lenore Cruickshank.*

March 31 at 12:57 PM



“ *My darling sister, you will be oh' so very much missed by me believe that! And now with out you, I no longer have anyone to argue or laugh with about crazy esoteric nonsense. Now hopefully you don't have to worry about finding your teeth anymore either. Omg so-so silly. I love you forever sister with all my heart..*

Eve Ales - March 30 at 09:26 PM