

Gretchen Regene Mannix (née Halvorson) passed away peacefully on August 24 at Edenbrook in Rochester, surrounded by family. She succumbed to the effects of recently-diagnosed end-stage lung cancer. She was 75 years old.

Born in Forest City, Iowa, Gretchen took a longer, more adventurous path to Rochester, Minnesota. She spent much of her early life in Minneapolis and St Paul, where her father was a pastor and later taught at Luther Seminary. She traveled with her family to Scotland when in school, attended college in Germany, and moved to Northern California where she attended newly formed Sonoma State University. From there, she moved to Anchorage (and later to Juneau) Alaska, and on to Washington, Minnesota, California, Arizona, and back to Minnesota. Her career varied with location; she worked as an economic development facilitator for native tribes in Alaska, tribal administrator in Washington state and Minnesota, and as a grant writer later in her life.

Many of Gretchen's happy times were on the water – fishing with her family in Homer, Alaska, or sailing in Prince William Sound – or playing cards with friends and family. As a pastor's kid (and pastor's sister, and pastor's mother-in-law) she maintained a practical and enduring relationship with the Lutheran Church. A terrible driver with an even worse sense of direction, she nevertheless loved a road trip, and loved to travel when she could, visiting Japan, London, the Virgin Islands, Fiji and Australia.

Gretchen passed along many valuable life lessons to her children. Explore the world. Music is not optional. Always lead back trump. Never leave the house without a book. Go to church. And always, always, always fight for your kids. She lives on in her family through these tenets. She has been welcomed to her eternal reward by her parents Rev. Dr. Arndt and Emily Halvorson, her brother Rev. Rick Halvorson and her sister Karen Hedland. She is survived by her sisters Sara (Randy) Johnson and Martha (Dick) Knutson, brother Rev. Dr. Len (Karen) Halvorson, brother-in-law John Hedland, sister-in-law Maryann (Al) Solmonson, her former husband Mike Mannix and their smart, patient, good-looking children Deborah (Rev. Tim) Carnahan and Dr. Nathan (Kristin) Mannix. She will also be missed by her 4 grandchildren Caitlyn Carnahan, and Noah, Ian and Emily Mannix as well as numerous nieces, nephews and their children who have enlivened many Halvorson gatherings. Special thanks to the caregivers at Edenbrook and Mayo Hospice who provided such compassionate, professional care. Any gifts or memorials may be sent to Mount Olive Lutheran Church.