



## Mary Lou Francka

May 5, 1948 - September 5, 2024

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Mary Lou “Maw-Maw” Choate Francka of Bolivar. She was a beloved wife, mother, Maw-Maw, sister, aunt, and friend to many. She went to join her Lord and Savior at the age of 76 on Thursday, September 5, 2024, suddenly and peacefully, in her home.

Mary Lou was born May 5th, 1948, in Springfield, the daughter of B.A. and Mary Albert Choate.

She grew up in the Springfield, Walnut Grove, and Morrisville areas, where she happily attended church and Bible Schools at Oakville Baptist Church when picked up by the preacher. She worked on the family farm doing any chores that were necessary, in addition to baby-sitting and helping to raise her 10 siblings. Many childhood days were spent down at the river escaping the wrath of her brothers. They would force the girls to be horses, tie them up on the bluff, and then leave them as they headed back to the house. She worked at Frito-Lay where she delighted in bringing home the “rejects” as a treat for her siblings, and then proudly graduated from Marion C. Early High School with the class of 1966.

Mary Lou met Bill Francka, the love of her life, at The Little Bo after attending the stock car races with her family in the summer of 1967. Their dates were often at the drive-in watching Elvis movies which Mary Lou loved while Bill slept. She was baptized at St. Agnes in the spring of 1968, and married to Bill

on May 4, 1968, at St. Agnes Cathedral in Springfield. They shared 56 years of marriage, and to this union were born three children, Lisa, David, and Thomas. She was a hard-working farmer's wife raising her children and cooking many large meals for the farm hands. The table was always full with fried chicken, smothered steak, mashed potatoes, corn, green beans, fresh tomatoes, salad, rolls, home-made ice cream, angel food cake, brownies (with and without walnuts), and no-bake cookies. She and Bill enjoyed supporting the SMSU Bears basketball teams in the 1970's and 80's with the Francka siblings, as well as making many trips to St. Louis to support the Cardinals. They were able to take one family vacation to St. Louis in the summer of 1979 to enjoy Grant's Farm, the zoo, the Arch, Stan Musial's restaurant, and the Cardinal games. She was also very active in Lisa's FHA activities, as well as the boys' FFA events. She was an avid card player, shopper, Chiefs fan, and she greatly enjoyed her weekly trips to the beauty shop. Mary Lou cherished the 3-day trips she would make with Bill to Branson in the spring and fall. She was the loudest and proudest cheerleader in the stands for her children and grandchildren's ballgames. You always knew she was there, and the gyms and ballfields will never be the same! She had unconditional love for all of them. She loved travelling out west with Bill, Jake, and Katie, to Nashville and Memphis with Gary and Glenda, Washington D.C. and Disneyworld with Lisa and Aubrey, the ocean with Natalie, Shania, Meleah, and Sue, and going on any other adventures she was invited to attend.

She had such a huge heart and would do anything for anyone, always making sure that they had enough of everything. She could always be seen near the babies, and was privileged to baby-sit many grandkids and for close friends considered family.

Mary Lou was preceded in death by her parents, two sisters, Kathryn Bingham and Patricia Choate, and one brother, Paul Choate.

She is survived by her husband Bill, daughter, Lisa (Jeff) Funk, sons, David

(Natalie), Thomas (Jessica), grandchildren, Zachary (Taylor), Shania, Scott (Mikayla), Meleah, Caleb (Haley), Austin (Tatem), Isaac, Aubrey, and Luke, great-grandchildren, Will, Reagan, Lane, Cassidy, Timber, Briar, and baby Carter on the way, brothers, Robert, Billy, Jerry, and Charlie Choate, sisters, Barbara Hoffman, Brenda Burch, and Betty England, and numerous other family members and friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Mary Lou Francka Scholarship Fund. Please make checks payable to Marion C. Early High School, 5309 S. Main Ave, Morrisville, MO 65710.

# Previous Events

## Rosary

SEP 8. 2:30 PM (CT)

Butler Funeral Home - Bolivar  
407 E. Broadway  
Bolivar, MO 65613  
(417) 326-5233  
<https://butlerfuneralhome.com/>

## Visitation

SEP 8. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Butler Funeral Home - Bolivar  
407 E. Broadway  
Bolivar, MO 65613  
(417) 326-5233  
<https://butlerfuneralhome.com/>

## Requiem Mass

SEP 9. 10:30 AM (CT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
1405 W Fair Play St  
Bolivar, MO 65613

# Tribute Wall

JA

“ I was so very sorry to hear of the passing of Mary Lou. She was always so friendly and encouraging to me and members of my family. Bill please know that you and your family are in my thoughts and prayers.

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**Jerald Andrews** - September 09, 2024 at 10:34 AM

HC

“ So sorry for your loss. Mary Lou was such a special lady We do enjoyed visiting with Mary Lou and Bill at the ballgames She will lol be very missed. Prayers

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**H D and Sally Cribbs** - September 08, 2024 at 06:57 PM

MC

“ I am so very sorry for your loss. Mary Lou will be missed by many of the community too. My prayers for peace for the entire family and for strength to get through this difficult time.

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**Myrtle Cox** - September 08, 2024 at 04:41 PM

KC

“ So sorry for your loss .May you have many happy memories of Mary Lou . Kathy McCurdy Cowan & Beryl Cowan

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**Kathy Cowan** - September 08, 2024 at 10:14 AM

KS

“ Kevin And Patty Stewart purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mary Lou Francka.



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**Kevin And Patty Stewart** - September 07, 2024 at 08:45 PM

WT

“ Wally Bui and Tina Tran planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Lou Francka.

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**Wally Bui and Tina Tran** - September 07, 2024 at 04:40 PM

WT

“ Wally Bui and Tina Tran purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Mary Lou Francka.



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**Wally Bui and Tina Tran** - September 07, 2024 at 04:40 PM

RH

“ Richard and Virginia Hartley planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Lou Francka.

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**Richard and Virginia Hartley** - September 06, 2024 at 08:32 PM

RH

“ Richard and Virginia Hartley purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mary Lou Francka.



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**Richard and Virginia Hartley** - September 06, 2024 at 08:32 PM

KF

“ Kevin and Judy Freeze and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Lou Francka.

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**Kevin and Judy Freeze and family** - September 06, 2024 at 07:11 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Mary Lou Francka.



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September 06, 2024 at 07:11 PM



“ So sorry to hear of Mary Lou's passing. I first met her when my sister married her brother Bob and have always felt like family when I was around her. I can remember her laugh and cheering at the ballgames. My thoughts and prayers are with all her family.



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**Patty Craig** - September 06, 2024 at 06:32 PM

KC

“ Sorry for your lost. May your memories help you to remember the happy times. Kathy McCurdy Cowan & Beryl Cowan

Kathy Cowan - September 06, 2024 at 05:44 PM

CA

“ We are sad to hear about Your loss. We remember her at all the basketball games at Marion C Early she will be missed. Our love and prayers for the family's Cliff and Gwen Adkins.

Cliff Adkins - September 06, 2024 at 02:38 PM

JJ

“ Jenny and the girls at Jellybeans purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of Mary Lou Francka.



Jenny and the girls at Jellybeans - September 06, 2024 at 02:33 PM

MA

“ Mirabel A. purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mary Lou Francka.



Mirabel A. - September 06, 2024 at 01:57 PM

MA

“ Mirabel A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Lou Francka.

Mirabel A. - September 06, 2024 at 01:57 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Lou Francka.*



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September 06, 2024 at 12:05 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mary Lou Francka.*



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September 06, 2024 at 10:53 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mary Lou Francka.*



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September 06, 2024 at 10:39 AM



“ *I still remember Mary Lou dancing up a storm at Jeff and Lisa's wedding. We are so sorry for your loss. Chris and Karen Minor*

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**karen Minor** - September 06, 2024 at 08:57 AM

PW

“ Pam, Chad, Thomas, Anna Wright planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Lou Francka.

Pam, Chad, Thomas, Anna Wright - September 05, 2024 at 09:28 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Lou Francka.



September 05, 2024 at 09:28 PM

DP

“ David and Barbara Pulkrabek purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mary Lou Francka.



David and Barbara Pulkrabek - September 05, 2024 at 05:29 PM

KD

“ Mary Lou and bill were my neighbors for several years. She was always a delight to be around and always made me laugh She was as a kind and good friend. Now she is with our lord and Savior. I pray for peace and comfort to her family.  
Kay Stottlemyre/Daneshfar

kay daneshfar - September 05, 2024 at 04:32 PM

AC

*Many many good memories of Mary Lou when we were growing up ❤️  
. RIP sweet cousin 😭*

**Ann Choate** - September 06, 2024 at 05:25 PM

LR

*“ Our deepest condolences. Love this family so much. Loved seeing Mary Lou dance with the babies at the family reunion. What a beautiful soul.*

*Lori & Francis Ruzicka*

**Lori Ruzicka** - September 05, 2024 at 01:13 PM

LH

*Prayers to the family and friends. Bill & MaryLou were wonderful people & neighbors . Marylou was a spirited lady and very proud of her family and will be missed by all those whose life she touched .  
Neighbors -Clint & Leta (Altic) Harmon*

**Leta Harmon** - September 07, 2024 at 11:54 PM