



Norma F. Wachauf

February 5, 1952 - July 25, 2025

Norma F. Wachauf, 73, of Wapakoneta passed away peacefully at 11:50 a.m. on Friday, July 25, 2025, in her home with her loving husband and daughter by her side. “Norma Jean”, as she was fondly referred to by family and friends, was born on February 5, 1952, to Raymond & Edith (Dickrede) Pothast in Lima, Ohio. After just three dates and six months of her writing him letters overseas, James “Wac” Wachauf knew she was the one, and he purchased her engagement ring before leaving Vietnam. Four months after returning home, Wac proposed to Norma and gave her the diamond as a high school graduation gift. The two married at St. John’s Catholic Church in Fryburg, Ohio, on May 1, 1971. Anyone who knew them could attest that they shared a love like no other. Wac can still recall the outfit she was wearing the first time he asked her out on a date.

In addition to Wac, Norma is survived by her daughter, Jennifer (Corey) Zwiebel of Wapakoneta; two granddaughters Sydney Zwiebel of Cridersville and Jalyssa (fiancé, Austen Rush) of Lima; a grandson, Kalen Zwiebel of Wapakoneta; two great grandchildren, Wesley and Harper Collins of Cridersville; and a very spoiled bichon poo named Jaxson. Mama Wackie/Gamma Great never missed a game, show, competition, or party opportunity to support her grandchildren or great grandchildren. She enjoyed nothing more than spending time with her family and sharing stories and pictures of them with others.

Norma was the fifth of seven children born to Ray and Edith. She is survived by her sisters Jeanette Fortman of Sagamore Hills, Ohio; Marceil (Tom) Fisher of Wapakoneta; Wilma (Myron) Oen of Troy, Ohio; Karen (Steve) Shipley of Robertsdale, AL; and Joyce (Dave) Hauenstein of Lakeview, Ohio. In addition, she is survived by in-laws, Betty Pothast of Versailles; Dave & Kathy Wachauf, Joe & Pam Wachauf, Todd & Linda Gerstner, and Chuck & Bev Wachauf all of Wapakoneta, as well as many nieces, nephews, their spouses, and children who adored Aunt Norma and her storytelling. In addition to her parents, Norma was preceded in death by her brother, John Pothast and two brothers-in-law, Bill Fortman and Larry D. Hall.

Norma started her career as a waitress at the Chalet Inn before becoming a teller at First National Bank and then People's Bank, all in Wapakoneta. Following this, she worked 25 years as the receptionist and personal secretary to Mr. Petty at JB Tool and Machine until it closed in January 2002. Norma worked a short stint cleaning houses solo and then at American Industrial Partners before returning as a teller in 2008 at Minster Bank in Wapakoneta. Customers would stand in line longer just to have her wait on them. After retiring in 2015, Wac and Norma teamed up to clean houses until summer 2024. If there weren't sweeper marks in the carpet, it wasn't clean in Norma Jean's eyes.

Like a famous line from one of her favorite TV shows, the 1970 Wapakoneta High School graduate could "light up a room". Five years ago, she started the 1970's Lunch Bunch bringing fellow classmates together on a monthly basis. They described her as the "root" of their group, always making sure to visit with everyone at the luncheon or even schedule more lunches to accommodate those that missed. When the disease caused her to be more homebound, you could also find her watching Game Show Network or coloring pictures (823 of them to be exact) on her phone.

Once described as “the cat’s meow”, Norma never knew a stranger and would strike up a conversation with anyone. She had the gift of gab and a laugh that could be heard from what seemed like miles away. Norma was known for her genuine concern for others and enjoyed working the voting poll and serving funeral dinners at St. Joseph Parish as a service to others. If you saw her out and about, you could not help but notice how well dressed she was with her flashy fingernails, matching jewelry, and stylish purse. She loved trips to the casino, watching the hummingbirds outside her window, and outings with friends (restaurants, comedy shows, concerts, parties...anywhere where she could socialize). Norma’s favorite song was Dancing Queen by ABBA, and you can bet she was on the dance floor when it played at a wedding especially if she was “feeling the wine”.

The family would like to thank those who provided encouraging support and prayers during Norma’s almost two year battle with Bulbar ALS. Unfortunately, her voice was the first thing that this merciless disease stole from her and us. Oh, what we wouldn’t have done following her diagnosis to hear her contagious laugh and constant requests to get us something to eat or drink one more time. ALS may have won the physical battle with her body (although she gave it a heck of a challenge even in her final days), but it certainly did not destroy her spirit. Norma’s positive outlook and determination to live these last two years to the fullest made her a true warrior. Her earthly presence will be missed, but she has taught us not to take a single day for granted. Stop waiting for the perfect moment and LIVE.

Norma’s family would like to express their deepest gratitude to Dr. Mueller and the staff at Mercy Health-Shawnee Family Medicine; Dr. Neel and Jona Ridgway of The University of Cincinnati Medical Center Neurology; Teresa, Steffanie, and Shanna from New Vision Nursing and Home Care; and Sarah,

Jamie, Elizabeth, Kayla, and Dr. Keighley from Grand Lake Hospice who went above and beyond to provide quality care not only to her but support to the rest of the family during this difficult journey.

Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:30 a.m., Friday, August 1, 2025, at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Wapakoneta, with Fr. Sean Wilson officiating. Burial is to follow in the St. John Cemetery in Fryburg. The family will receive friends from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m., Thursday, July 31, 2025, and 9-9:45 a.m. on Friday, August 1, 2025, at the Eley Funeral Home and Crematory, St. Rt., 501, Wapakoneta. The family requests that you wear bright colors for both events as you join them in celebrating her life and admission to her eternal home free of suffering. In lieu of flowers or memorial gifts, Norma requested that you make monetary donations in her memory to New Vision Nursing and Home Care or the Holy Face of Jesus to help those in need. Envelopes will be available at the funeral home. Condolences may be expressed at www.eleyfuneralhomeandcrematory.com.

Cemetery Details

St. John Cemetery

Fryburg, OH

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 31. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Eley Funeral Home & Crematory
1102 Lincoln Ave.
Wapakoneta, OH 45895
eleyfuneralhome@gmail.com
<http://www.eleyfuneralhomeandcrematory.com>

Visitation

JUL 31. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Eley Funeral Home & Crematory
1102 Lincoln Ave.
Wapakoneta, OH 45895
eleyfuneralhome@gmail.com
<http://www.eleyfuneralhomeandcrematory.com>

Visitation

AUG 1. 9:00 AM - 9:45 AM (ET)

Eley Funeral Home & Crematory
1102 Lincoln Ave.
Wapakoneta, OH 45895
eleyfuneralhome@gmail.com
<http://www.eleyfuneralhomeandcrematory.com>

Service

AUG 1. 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
Pearl Street
Wapakoneta, OH 45895

Tribute Wall

VF

“ We sent our condolences. Norma was always very friendly even though we didn't see her often.

Vern & Judy Fischer

Vern & Judy Fischer - July 31, 2025 at 08:11 PM

LP

“ I met Norma and Wacky at my sister's home (Candy and Bruce Palmer). Norma was full of life and laughter and wit. God Bless the family left behind as we continue to pray for them. I'm truly sorry for this loss of beautiful life.

Leslie Patten

Leslie Patten - July 27, 2025 at 10:16 AM

RH

“ Rita Hubbard lit a candle in memory of Norma F. Wachauf



rita hubbard - July 27, 2025 at 01:02 AM

RH

“ Jim, I am sorry to hear of Norma's passing. May God be with you in your sorrow and processing. Rita

rita hubbard - July 27, 2025 at 01:01 AM

JM

“ *Janet Miller lit a candle in memory of Norma
F. Wachauf*



Janet Miller - July 26, 2025 at 03:43 PM