

Powhattan, KS



Mary Lou Watkins Banks, 72, of Powhattan, KS died Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023 at her home with her beloved husband Wesley, loving sisters - Diane & Kathy, and niece Haley by her side. She was born August 14, 1951 in Bartlesville, Okla., the daughter of Jack and Beatrice Watkins.

Growing up, Mary Lou lived across the street from the swimming pool in Bartlesville. Every day it was open Mary Lou and her sisters could be found there. Her love for warm weather and the water stayed with her throughout her life. Over the years, after her father- death, the family would move back and forth between Bartlesville and Smyrna, GA where Mary Lou- older sister Jackie lived. In 1969 Mary Lou graduated from College High School in Bartlesville, OK.

A proud member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Mary Lou made her home for a few years after high school in the Cherokee Nation capital Tahlequah, OK. Afterwards she lived in various places throughout Oklahoma.

In 1985, Mary Lou met Wesley Banks in Bartlesville. They were married in Owasso, OK on April 3, 1993. In Oklahoma they owned and operated two restaurants: one in Tulsa and one in Sand Springs, OK. In 2004, they moved to Horton, KS. In 2012, in Horton, they opened their third restaurant, Blue Ribbon Diner.

After retiring from the restaurant business in November of 2022 they moved to the country near Powhattan. Mary Lou loved the country home and the peace it brought her to be close to nature. In August 2023 shortly after celebrating her 72nd birthday she received a diagnosis of metastatic esophageal cancer. After much deliberation she decided against traditional cancer treatments. In true Mary Lou fashion she graciously and bravely embraced each day she had left.

Mary Lou was preceded in death by her parents, Jack and Beatrice, her sister Jacqueline “Jackie” Watkins Booth, sister Nancy Sue Baker. Survivors include her loving husband Wesley of the home, sisters Diane Watkins Landers (Marietta, GA) and Kathy Lynn Watkins of the home, numerous other family members, lifelong friends, and friends that were more like family. Special thanks, appreciation, and love to: Mary Lou and Wesley- niece, Randi Lynn, NEK Home Health and Hospice, and all of the friends and family that checked in, sent cards, and

offered their love and support.

Mary Lou requested she be cremated and a private family service held at a later date.