



## Kathryn Opal Secrest

December 8, 1934 - October 1, 2019

Kathryn Secrest (Born December 8th, 1934)

On Tuesday, October 1st, 2019, Kathryn Secrest, age 84, passed away following an ongoing battle with cancer. She was preceded in her death by her Father (Nels Bakken), Mother (Nora Bakken), Brother (Roy Bakken) and Husband (William Secrest). She is survived by her two sons, Allen Secrest of Chicago, Illinois and Michael Baker of Honolulu, Hawaii as well as Michael's wife Mara and their children and grandchildren.

Overcoming a difficult childhood, Kathryn quickly developed a strong sense of purpose and desire to help others. Her love of the arts and the Lord provided her the tools and skills to make a difference in the lives of many. Initially, she began sewing and sending care packages of hand-made toys and stuffed animals to Chicago-area children's homes. From there, she began volunteering at local nursing homes—"adopting" individuals who had no families, leading craft and art classes and playing the piano for resident sing-alongs. During this time, she was blessed with the gift of performance, merging all her talents into becoming a Christian clown. As "Raggedy Patches" she performed over 200 charitable programs—juggling, performing magic and gently demonstrating the love of God to those in need. Aside from her charitable work, she was a role model to her sons, taught piano, art and Sunday school and directed musical programs for her church.

Following the death of her husband, she moved to Chicago to be closer to one of her sons. During her time in Chicago she continued to pursue her passions—taking art classes at the School of the Art Institute, comedy and improvisation classes at Zanies and Second City and theology classes at Moody Bible Institute. Once again, her desire to create laughter and happy memories became forefront. Joining a small start-up church, she began working with the pastor to form a Christian comedy troupe. Unfortunately, her dream of creating the troupe was cut short by declining health and mobility issues.

Despite her physical limitations she continued to provide art and piano lessons—including teaching piano to members of her nursing home staff—doing so until just weeks before

her death. In addition to her generosity and dedication to people, she loved animals and was well-known in the Lakeview area of Chicago for her 365 day-a-year treks to the park to feed the birds, squirrels and, in particular, one very special white duck.

In her last months, she spent time studying the bible, playing the piano, writing poetry, drawing and most importantly, keeping up with her many treasured pen pals. As part of her legacy, she penned her life story with the goal of letting others know that God can use anyone—regardless of background or upbringing—to do amazing and unexpected things.

A visitation will be held for Kathryn at R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory in Braidwood, IL on Saturday, October 12th from 4-7 pm. Interment will take place at Chapel Lawn Memorial Gardens in Crown Pointe, Indiana. Memorial donations can be made to the American Cancer Society. For more information and to sign her online guestbook please log on to [www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com](http://www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com) or find us on Facebook at R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory.

# Cemetery

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# Events

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**Chapel Lawn Memorial Gardens**

8178 Cline Ave.

Crown Pointe, IN, 46307

**OCT**

**12**

**Visitation**

04:00PM - 07:00PM

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R.W. Patterson Funeral Home

401 East Main St., Braidwood, IL, US, 60408

# Comments

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“ Fond memories of taking piano lessons from Kathy who lived two doors down and was forgiving but noted the many times I did not practice much between lessons. I continued the lessons more for the time spent with her than learning the piano. She was always kind and a good Christian woman. I wish I could find the snap shot of walking in the parade down Main Street dressed as a clown tossing candy to the kids. I am fortunate to have known her. My condolences to her family.

Erin (King) Humphreys - October 18, 2019 at 11:47 AM

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“ Allen,  
Kathy was a true friend to me and she was faithful to stay in touch when I left Chicago in 2003. True friends are rare. Kathy was precious to me. I cherish the memories we made in Chicago. I kept some of the letters over the years and a book she gave me. I cherish those as well. I admire her faith. She will be missed!

Candy Lievsay

Candy Lievsay - October 13, 2019 at 10:19 PM

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“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Kathryn Opal Secret.



October 12, 2019 at 08:14 AM

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“ 36 files added to the album LifeTributes



R W Patterson Funeral Homes, Ltd. - October 11, 2019 at 03:24 PM

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“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Kathryn Opal Secret.



October 11, 2019 at 03:06 PM

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“ Heavenly Heights Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kathryn Opal Secret.



October 11, 2019 at 09:04 AM

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“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Kathryn Opal Secret.



October 11, 2019 at 08:27 AM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kathryn Opal Secret.



October 10, 2019 at 08:55 PM

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“ William Lierman purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of Kathryn Opal Secrest.



William Lierman - October 10, 2019 at 07:12 AM

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Kathryn Opal Secrest.



October 09, 2019 at 10:34 PM

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“ Phathom Pharmaceuticals purchased the Bountiful Rose Basket for the family of Kathryn Opal Secrest.



Phathom Pharmaceuticals - October 09, 2019 at 04:16 PM

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“ Allen-  
It hardly seems enough to say “I’m sorry for your loss”. Words fail in times like these. I hope that you can find some comfort in all of the wonderful memories of your Mother. You were so blessed to have her in your life as was she to have you.  
Diane D’Amico

Diane D’Amico - October 08, 2019 at 12:00 PM

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“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Kathryn Opal Secret.



October 08, 2019 at 11:50 AM

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“ Allen, I am sorry to learn of your mother's passing. My deep condolences to you and your brother.

**John Slanicky** - October 08, 2019 at 01:31 AM

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“ 36 files added to the album LifeTributes

**R W Patterson Funeral Homes, Ltd.** - October 07, 2019 at 03:13 PM

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“ Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kathryn Opal Secret.



October 07, 2019 at 10:12 AM

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“ My dearest Allen I am sorry for your loss. Your mom was one of the sweetest spirits I ever came in contact with. I still have the hand sewn pillows and Christmas decorations that she made me for my wedding and still put them under the tree every year. My heart goes out to you. Hugs.

**Diana Thompson** - October 05, 2019 at 06:07 PM

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“ Only a few days ago, I was remembering a time Kathryn played and sang "It's a Wonderful World." She was kind, and sincere, and wanted nothing more than to make the world a more wonderful place. God bless her!

**Greg Linkous** - October 05, 2019 at 12:05 AM

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“ Allen, please accept my condolences on the death of your mother. She seems like she had been a wonderful person.

Pauline Guzek

**Pauline Guzek** - October 04, 2019 at 07:38 PM

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“ Dear Allen, I was so sorry to hear of your Mother 's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your brother. She was blessed to have you as a son. Judy Smith

**judy Smith** - October 04, 2019 at 05:51 PM