

Named Scholarship

Pius X High School ~ Pius X Foundation



Mary Elizabeth Brake Memorial Scholarship



Mary Elizabeth Brake was born Sept. 18, 1952, the first of eight children to Herb and Virginia Reese. Herb, a medical student, and Ginny, a teacher, enjoyed their beautiful first born girl while residing in Omaha, Neb. Before the family moved from Omaha to Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Denver, Colo., Mary enjoyed the addition of two sisters, Mary Martha (Pius X graduate) and Mary Margaret.

While in Denver the family grew, with the addition of two brothers and another sister, Herb Jr., Charles, and Mary Patricia. Mary's fourth sister, Mary Ann was born in Fort Knox, Ken. where the family was stationed until 1963. As the eldest, Mary Elizabeth carried a lot of the responsibility in caring for her younger siblings, baby-sitting, entertaining and loving them.

Mary's elementary school years constituted a change of venue approximately every eighteen months. She was schooled in eight different states. Mary always adjusted well to all the changes. She was a good student, liked to read, enjoyed music and loved to play the piano. While living in Fort Sill, Okla., Mary became an accomplished horseback rider. With her favorite horse Candy Date, Mary took home many ribbons and awards in dressage and jumping.

The family moved to Lincoln, Neb. where Mary entered Blessed Sacrament Elementary School. She went on to attend Pius X High School and graduated in 1970. Mary's first year in college she studied music at Fontbonne in St Louis, Mo, followed by a semester as an exchange student in France. Shortly after she arrived back home from France her third brother, David (Pius X graduate), was born. Mary was now the eldest of eight children. Mary continued her education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She joined Delta Delta Delta sorority and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education.

Mary delighted in her two sons, Nathan, born in 1974, and Kevin (Pius X graduate), born in 1976. Moving to Seward, Neb. Mary opened a preschool, called the Stone House, which is still a landmark there today. Moving back to Lincoln, Mary, with great enthusiasm, taught gifted children. She was involved with many community affairs and never missed any of the boys' activities. She made a career change to real estate where she excelled in serving those in need of a home. A big surprise to Mary and a blessing was the birth of her daughter Elizabeth Bayley Brake. Mary and Gene loved each other dearly, their new daughter Bayley, Nathan, Kevin and their extended family and friends.

On June 20, 2008, Mary Elizabeth died suddenly in a tragic horse back riding accident in Beaver Creek, Colo., while on a family vacation. She is dearly missed by Gene, her children, mother and father, brothers and sisters and extended family and friends. Mary was a woman gifted to love others. All her life she embraced and cared for her children and everyone else's children; she nurtured her family and supported her friends. The gift of God's Divine Love expanding through Mary gave her the ability to clearly see people's talents and abilities and support and nurture them – helping them to be the best people they could be. “As my wife, best friend and working partner, instead of taking credit for anything, with which she deserved, she always preferred to tell me how well I handled the challenging situations that came up in our life,” said her husband Gene.

“She preferred to be behind the scene and not in the limelight,” Gene said. “Whenever she saw a need she would fill it; she was a friend to everyone. She didn't ask first how you were doing; she took action and filled the need, the void, soothed your tired mind or fixed the complication before you were aware she had seen the need or heard about the problem.”

“My wife was a supporter of Catholic education,” Gene said. “Mary continuously dedicated herself to the Pius X Foundation. She was committed to help in funding and supporting Catholic education for all those who had a desire to learn in an atmosphere that nourished the precepts of Christ's teachings. Mary was all about service and caring for others. Her dynamic energy uplifted and soothed. But, if you asked her how she found time to do so much she would tell you the source of her unlimited supply of energy was a gift from God. Through service to others she walked with Christ and by doing so, powerful things happened; people and situations changed for the better. Mary Elizabeth Brake, was a woman of grace.”