



Nancy Jo Rush was born July 5, 1956 in Sargent, Nebraska to John C. and Betty (McKinney) Rush. She passed away on May 13, 2016 at the Valley County Health System in Ord, Nebraska, at the age of 59.

Nancy was the first known survivor in Nebraska of the parasitic blood disease, Toxoplasmosis, which caused her blindness since birth. She was to face and overcome many challenges during her lifetime. At the age of five, Nancy began school at the Nebraska School for the Visually Handicapped in Nebraska City, returning home on weekends and holidays to be with her family. Like most little girls, she was a Brownie and a Girl Scout, a 4-H member, and took piano lessons, where she learned to play each piece by ear.

Following graduation from high school, Nancy attended UNK in Kearney, earning Bachelor of Art degrees in both English and history. Her love for these two subjects remained strong throughout her lifetime. Nancy was an avid reader and was well informed on current events and politics. Through her reading, Nancy learned of a program that trained seeing-eye dogs. She flew to Michigan and trained with "Jenny", a large black Labrador, who became her loyal companion for the next twelve years.

Nancy went on to earn a second degree from Wesleyan University in Lincoln. She applied her degree as a massage therapist at The Royal Court in Kearney, where she worked for many years. It was during this time that Nancy was first diagnosed and treated for cancer.

When the trip to Kearney became more difficult for John and Betty, Nancy moved to Sargent and continued her massage business out of her home. John, Betty, and Nancy moved to Burwell in 2007, where the three took care of each other, just as they had done throughout Nancy's life.

Despite blindness, illnesses, and surgeries, Nancy never complained. She found comfort in reading her Braille bible and attending her weekly bible study. Nancy enjoyed competing on Jeopardy (from the comfort of her living room) and was an avid Kansas City Royals fan. Her nieces and nephews have many memories of Aunt Nancy showing them Braille, playing her organ, and weaving colorful afghans on her loom, which she proudly gave away as graduation and baby gifts to her family.

Nancy passed away peacefully following a long battle with cancer. She leaves to mourn her passing: her mother, Betty; sisters Jeanne' (Lee) Stout of Burwell, Robyn Gray of Sherman, Illinois, and Vicki (Jim) Walter of Chambers; 9 nieces and nephews, and 21 great-nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her father, John, and her grandparents.

Funeral services were at 2:00 P.M. Wednesday, May 18, 2016 at the First Congregational Church in Burwell, Burial was in the Madison Square Cemetery west of Taylor. Pastor Alan Petersen officiated. Memorials are suggested to 4 The Cure, which supports local people seeking cancer treatments.