

"Dolores Shafer passed away in the early morning of February 25, 2008, after a brief battle with Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome, a serious condition of the lungs, ending a 30-year fight with multiple sclerosis.

Born in Holland, Michigan in 1939 to Angeline (Lampen) and Louis Ramaker, Dolores-known by friends as Dee - spent much of her early life in the Holland area. When she was 5, her family built a home in nearby Overisel and joined the Overisel Reformed Church. Of Dutch descent, she and her younger siblings Louise and Gary maintained connections to their heritage through a great-grandmother who was brought from the Netherlands as a young child to escape the potato famine in Europe, and through community traditions such as the Tulip Festival.

She attended Sandyview Elementary and Zeeland High School, receiving her diploma in 1957. Knowing early on she wanted to be a teacher, she pursued an education degree at Hope College. While at college, she worked at the H.J. Pickle Company during the summers (pickle season). Upon graduation, she began teaching 10th grade and working with students with learning disabilities at the high school in the nearby town of Coopersville. While at Coopersville, she met her husband, Wendell Shafer, a fellow junior high teacher at the time, with whom she moved out to Seattle and had a daughter, Lisa.

In 1965, Dee began teaching at St. Nicholas School for girls, which merged with the Lakeside School in 1971. Dee remained with Lakeside Middle School until she retired from teaching in 1988. In the midst of her teaching career she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Her passion for teaching remained strong however and she hardly missed a beat even as it became difficult for her to walk. Dee's last few years at Lakeside were spent teaching from an electric three-wheeled scooter. Dee was also a devoted fan of her daughter Lisa's athletic endeavors at Lakeside, never missing a game.

After retirement, Dee's MS made it difficult to live by herself, and she moved into a variety of group home situations before finally settling at the Life Care Center of Bothell in 1993, known at the time as the Eastern Star Nursing Home. Her commitment to serving others inspired her to become an active advocate for nursing home residents, serving terms as both Vice Chair and Chair of the Resident Council of Washington. She campaigned to get large businesses to donate laptop computers to statewide council members and she helped to increase membership in the council, encouraging people to express themselves and take advantage of benefits available to seniors.

Even after retiring from the Resident's Council, Dee maintained an active schedule that included attending church and bible study weekly at Northcreek Presbyterian Church, promoting the annual Special People's Christmas Cruise, and playing a great deal of bingo. She was the 'veteran resident' at Life Care of Bothell, where she connected with many staff and residents. She believed that you could learn a lot by being with people – talking with them, helping them or simply sharing with them.

She was an inspiration and a model of courage in the face of adversity, with genuine interest in others, inexhaustible good spirits and a witty sense of humor. She will be missed."