Jesena "Jay" Elizabeth Belch

October 19, 1933 - February 23, 2023

JESENA (JAY) ELIZABETH BELCH
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We are saddened to announce the passing of Jesena Elizabeth Belch, affectionately called “Jay”, after a long struggle with serious lung illness. She passed away on Thursday, February 23, 2023, having peacefully made it back home, where she wanted to be, after a stay in the hospital.

Jay was originally from Haverhill, MA and graduated from high school in 1951. Upon graduation she went to the Catherine Laboure’ School of Nursing in Dorchester, MA, graduating with her RN in 1954. One of the proudest moments of her life was the day she graduated as an RN. As a teenager, Jay had weight issues that kept her from a lot of socialization. In her early years as a nurse, she worked for a kind doctor who took her under his guidance and she lost the pounds that had kept her from having a more social life. This weight loss not only changed her from being a shy person, but into a beautiful young woman with self-confidence. Her confidence in her nursing ability was never questionable in her mind, and she did her best to use that self-confidence, not just in her life as an RN, but through the love she showered on others. Her happiness was truly generated in a way that people who met her, rarely forgot her.

After a time of being an RN, Jay decided to join the Navy. She was most proud of being able to serve in this way. One of her assignments included going to Honduras where there had been a large disease outbreak. Being there, seeing all that people were going through, helped her realize just how special her own life had been. Her gratitude for all she had, her own good health, and opportunities she'd had, made her yearning to help people grow. She spoke of this time as a turning point in her ability to understand why helping others was so important to her. One of the crowning moments of joy in her later years was being taken on an Honor Flight in 2021, a time when she was truly honored for all she'd done.

While Jay was in the Navy she met and fell in love with Jasper L Kranke Jr, also a Navy man. As it happened, Jasper's nickname was also Jay. So, when their marriage took place, the family nicknamed them "little Jay' and "big Jay" just to distinguish who they were talking about! And between them, the "Jay's" produced their son Anthony William Kranke., Umatilla, FL.

Jays career as a nurse took her in a number of directions. She worked at Bethesda Naval Hospital, she worked for the Red Cross, for other doctor's offices, and also as a Hospice volunteer. In the intervening years she was remarried, to a man named James Belch and they moved to his house in Astor, FL. In 1979 While there, Jay worked for the local doctor Dr Anthony. This was her last job before she retired. She and Jim had bought an RV and began enjoying many camping trips with other couples.

Not too long into their marriage, Jay was diagnosed with breast cancer. No stranger to the disease (she had cancer shortly after her son Anthony was born), she bore her illness without complaint. Jim took very good care of her and marveled at her attitude of, "Will you please just fix this! I have things to do!" Not long after her own recovery, she volunteered to work with other breast cancer patients helping their recovery process. She knew just what to

do to help them.

Not too many years later Jim became the cancer patient and the tasks for caring were turned around. Jim died in 1999 At that point, Jay turned her energy to taking care of her mother, who had turned 90, was lonesome, decided the sunshine might feel pretty good on those old bones, and moved in with Jay. Her mother passed away in 2007 at the age of 95.

Jay is survived by her son, Anthony William Kranke and his wife Cheryl, their two sons, Michael Kranke and his wife Ashley, and their son, Weston, also Gregory Kranke and his wife Amy and their three children Bella, Abby and Henry.

Jay's parents were, father, Frederick Joseph Paradis, Groveland, MA, born 1911 and died in 1949; mother, Marion Grace Norris, Salem, NH, born 1912 and died in 2007; and her sister, Carolyn Patricia Lucas, Haverhill, MA, born in 1936 and died in 1996.

Jay has one surviving sister, Lois "Mickie" Richardson, and her husband, Neil Richardson, of Randolph, Vermont; along with a number of nephews, nieces and cousins.

Also survived by, James (Jim) Belch's Son Fred Belch and his wife Linda, son's Coy & Lamar Belch and daughter Francis Belch Brack. Jim's Daughter Susan McDonald and her son Derick Clifton.

Cemetery Details

Florida National Cemetery

6502 SW 102nd Avenue
Bushnell, FL 33513

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR **18**. 3:00 PM (ET)

New Life Baptist Church
10035 Poe Street
(corner of Radio Road and Poe)
Leesburg, FL

Tribute Wall

Beyers Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Jesena "Jay" Elizabeth Belch

Beyers Funeral Home - March 10, 2023 at 02:15 PM

Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Jesena "Jay" Elizabeth Belch.

March 16, 2023 at 02:39 PM

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Jesena has been my moms pen pal since I was a little kid when my mom was in the military. I am so sorry to hear about her passing. Prayers to her friends and family.

dionna - February 28, 2023 at 08:08 PM