



## Jeanne Marie Nikitas

January 30, 1921 - September 15, 2025

Jeanne Marie Nikitas passed away at 104 years young. She was born the 7th child of George and Frances Nikitas, and grew up in Kalamazoo Michigan.

Jeanne was tasked with being a 2nd mother to her 4 younger siblings when she was yet a child herself. Known in the family as the outgoing one, Jeanne would love to go to the grocery store for her mother because she could engage in conversations with the neighbors who she met along the way. Her mother would get frustrated waiting for young Jeanne to return with the groceries but she knew and appreciated Jeanne's nature at a young age. Responsibility and duty were instilled in Jeanne as was a sense of obligation and accountability. She began working at the Cut Rate Candy Store in downtown Kalamazoo while in high school and was recognized as a reliable, dedicated employee. Many customers commented on her friendly demeanor and gregarious nature. Those traits proved essential when she became the store's owner several years later. She loved going on buying trips to Chicago and NYC with her sister Chris where she sought out fine restaurants, stylish clothes and sophisticated people. She especially loved visiting the east coast.

In 1950, Jeanne was united in marriage to her former husband Anthony Gianunzio and they settled in the Parkwood neighborhood for nearly 40 years.

Jeanne loved to visit local farmers and purchase in season fruits and

vegetables for canning and freezing. She baked bread and made the best cinnamon rolls. Her nutritious cooking like stuffed peppers, baked white fish with veggies and meatballs with oregano, garlic and mint were appreciated by her family and everyone she invited in. Having her brothers and sisters and their families over for the holidays was an extravaganza she relished.

Jeanne and Tony often entertained friends and supported many local political candidates with dinner parties in their honor.

Her daughters Denise and Alexandra (nee Gloria) meant the world to her. She exposed them to the arts and athletics at a young age and encouraged their interests in ballet, a foreign language, social dance, piano, ice skating, swimming and horseback riding. Their happiness, their education and their safety mattered most to her.

The last 20 years of her life were spent basking in the Florida sunshine. She enjoyed excellent health and mobility up until the last few weeks.

Jeanne had a strong sense of self, relied on the principals of logic and always stayed true to her religious beliefs.

She will be greatly missed.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her siblings: George, Stephen, John, Tony, Charles, Vennie, Bill, Vickie, Christine and Nick; and her daughter Denise Valeko. She is survived by her daughter Alexandra (Jan Michael Loomis) Marquette, son-in-law Tom Valeko and two grandsons Ryan Valeko and Michael Loomis.

# Tribute Wall

AL

“ 5 files added to the album *Through the years*



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**alexandramarquette** - September 30, 2025 at 06:37 PM

RW

“ *The last of the Nikita's family has left us. Aunt Jean had a long and well cared for life especially in her later years because of her daughter, our cousin Alex, and husband Jan. So many good memories of their house on the hill. Give mom a hug Aunt Jean*  
*Robb*

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**Robb Wing** - September 16, 2025 at 08:22 PM

EP

*My deepest condolences to you and your family. I am her brother George's granddaughter and remember her bright smile and vitality. This is a beautiful tribute and may her memory be a blessing. Ellen Petro*

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**ellen petro** - January 18 at 05:15 PM