



# Patricia Kovach

## Life Story

Described as loving, devoted, and hardworking, Patricia Kovach was a genuine blessing to all who were within her reach. Together she and her husband Joe, exemplified what marriage is truly intended to be as they were companions, partners, and best friends. Pat was devoted to her roles inside the home, yet she also enjoyed putting her skills and passions to work outside of the home. She ran a tight ship as a homemaker and thrived in an atmosphere of structure and order, which could be difficult to come by with a household of bustling children at times. Pat will be deeply missed while her memory is forever cherished by all who were blessed to know and love her.

The 1930s brought us some of the most trying days we have faced as a nation as the entire decade was clouded by the hardship that the Great Depression brought. The trying days were our reality throughout the entire decade when the unemployment rate soared and a crippling drought that covered our nation's heartland only added fuel to the already raging fire. Despite the trying times around them a young couple from Kalamazoo, Michigan, was able to shift their focus to a joyous time in their own lives as they were pleased to announce the birth of their healthy baby girl on June 11, 1932. Patricia was the youngest of 11 children born to her parents, Grover and Flora (Depew) Butcher, and she was raised in a conservative home filled with expectations, manners, and proper etiquette. Raised as a Methodist, her faith played an important role in her life throughout her entire journey. As the youngest of the Butcher clan, Pat was spoiled by both her parents and her siblings.

Although much of her formative years were filled with typical experiences for the youth of her generation, Pat did have quite a bit of added responsibility. Her parents were separated for a time, and of course she mastered being able to play both of her parents in order to get her way. At the same time, Pat attended local schools in addition to holding down a job as well as taking care of her mother. She graduated from Kalamazoo Central High School in 1951.

It was while in high school that Pat met the man with whom she would write a love story that would span 37 years. He was a handsome young football player named Joseph Kovach, and sparks flew right from the start. The couple began dating, carrying on a typical high school romance while falling hopelessly in love. Joe worked on the family farm and also had a job with the Kalamazoo Pipe Company. Pat's family was less than pleased with their relationship as he was Catholic as well as a blueberry farmer, which was not really what her parents had hoped their youngest daughter would find. Their love was the real thing, however, and although her parents were so upset that they almost didn't show, Pat and Joe were married on May 3, 1952, at St. Joseph Church in Kalamazoo by Fr. Nadrac.

After a honeymoon at Pictured Rocks in the Upper Peninsula, the couple moved to California as Joe was in the Navy at the time. They later moved to Missouri, and Joe was then sent overseas. Being a new wife was a bit of an adjustment as not only did Pat become a Catholic, but she also needed to learn to cook

and clean. Together the couple welcomed six children into their hearts and home: Deb, Cindy, Brenda, Peter, Juanita, and Chris. As a mother Pat tried to be firm, but she usually found herself saying, "Wait until your father gets home!" Lots of chaos tended to make Pat nervous as she was raised in a very orderly driven manner.

Joe owned and operated Joe Kovach's Barber Shop in Portage, and together they owned and operated Joe Kovach's Blueberries in Gobles for 65 years. As a family they loved camping, especially in the Upper Peninsula, as it was a time to get away and focus on family. Of course their vacations always occurred prior to the blueberry harvest in June. It was easy to see that over the years Pat and Joe remained deeply in love, which was such an inspiration to their children. To her children's recollection she and Joe only fought one time, which was when Joe's carefree self came home with a snowmobile. Since Pat was a penny pincher this was a shock to her system. They balanced each other in many ways including in the way that she was more serious and uptight while he was more carefree and fun-loving. One way the Pat and Joe were very much the same was in their dedication to both family and work. They did nearly everything together as a family including working on the farm. Family vacations often included extended family members from the Kovach side.

When her youngest child started school, Pat went back to school at the age of 35. She earned her teaching degree, which later led to a master's degree in education. Pat was an amazing educator who taught in Paw Paw for 25 years.

Pat and her loved ones were given a tough pill to swallow with the death of her loving husband on October 6, 1989. Although she treasured the companionship and love she shared with a man named Quinton Howard for 20 years, she was never quite the same after Joe's death.

There were numerous people and experiences that enriched Pat's life along her entire journey. Throughout the majority of her life she looked forward to regular gatherings with a group of lifelong friends from Kalamazoo Central High School. Pat was a lifelong and active member of St. John Bosco Church where she sang in the choir for years. In 1994 she and her son, Peter, went to sing for the late Pope John Paul II at St. Pete's with a church choir from Decatur. Pat traveled all over the world, but she loved camping up North the best. She enjoyed ceramics and liked eating any kind of food. Pat loved church hymns along with classical music, loved reading primarily educational work, and enjoyed looking for deals at auctions or garage sales.

All who knew Patricia Kovach would agree that she was genuinely beautiful on the inside and out. She was faithful, caring, and generous with unending love for others. Serious, hardworking, and extremely protective of the people she loved, Pat will never be forgotten.

Patricia Kovach died on September 16, 2014, at her home. Pat's family includes her 5 children: Deb Hohiemer, Cindy Kazeks, Brenda Searles, Peter (Vicky) Kovach and Juanita (Donald) Collier; daughter-in-law, Theresa Kovach; 21 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; significant other of 20 years, Quinton Howard and many nieces and nephews. Pat was preceded in death by her husband, Joseph Kovach; son, Christopher Kovach; and grandson, Michael Kovach. A service will be held Thursday 6:00 p.m. at the Life Story Funeral Home, Betzler & Thompson – Paw Paw, 60900 M-40; 657-3870. Visitation will be Friday from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the funeral home where a rosary will be recited at 7 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Saturday 11 a.m. St. John Bosco Church, Mattawan. Burial at Maple Grove Cemetery followed by a luncheon in the church hall. Please visit Pat's personal web page at [www.lifestorynet.com](http://www.lifestorynet.com), where you can archive a favorite memory or photo and sign her online guestbook before coming to the funeral home. Memorial contributions may be made to Alzheimer's Association or St. John Bosco Church.