



## Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin

September 19, 1930 - July 2, 2023

Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin, 92, died peacefully on Sunday, July 2 at Houston Hospice. Joan was born September 19, 1930, in Savannah, Georgia, to the late Richard E. Kavanaugh, Sr. and Mary Barry Kavanaugh. Joan will be remembered as a woman who lived her life as a model of peaceful strength, kindness and faith. She made friends easily and was quick to make people laugh. She was often fondly referred to as “St. Joan,” because of her eternal patience. She will be missed dearly by all who knew and loved her.

Joan’s family moved to St. Petersburg, FL, when she was a teen. There she attended St. Paul’s Catholic High School (class of 1948), where she met the man who would become her husband of 62 years, William (Bill) Ruhlin. Joan went on to St. Petersburg Junior College and after graduating she was employed by Florida Power.

Joan and Bill married in 1953. Thus began their great adventure of raising ten children. Joan devoted her life to raising their children with endless love, grace, and creativity. She embraced the sleepless nights, ER visits, birthday parties, teacher conferences, room mother duties, sports banquets, ball games, swim meets, carpools in station wagons, family vacations, teenage antics, watermelons on beaches, orthodontics, and odd pets - all with unflappable steadfastness.

Joan was a devout Catholic and a role model to her family. She was especially proud of the fact that she and Bill were charter members of two Catholic parishes - St. Thomas More in Baton Rouge, and St. John Vianney in Houston. Joan was a member of the choir, a den mother for Cub Scouts and taught CCD for many years.

Joan and Bill embarked on countless travels together - with their children in the early years, and later road trips together to visit their children. Joan especially enjoyed her travels to welcome new grandchildren to the world, and brought invaluable support for her children as they became parents. Joan celebrated every birth in the family as though it were the first.

The Ruhlin's relocated their family many times. They moved with all ten children from Houston to Milan, Italy, in 1974, then to Belgium in 1975. During their expat years in Europe they explored many places and enjoyed new cultural experiences with their children. Over the years they loved telling the stories of their travels. They returned to Baton Rouge in 1979, and stayed there until their final move to Houston in 2007. While in Baton Rouge Joan discovered the joy of being an avid LSU sports fan, which she embraced wholeheartedly. GEAUX TIGERS!

Joan was preceded in death by her husband of 62 years, William Bradley Ruhlin; parents; infant daughter, Melissa Marie Ruhlin; grandson, Robert Charles Ruhlin; two infant grandsons, Michael and Matthew Decker; and brother Richard E. Kavanaugh, Jr.

Joan is survived by her brothers: Barry Kavanaugh of High Point, NC and Kevin Kavanaugh of Bradenton, FL.

Her children and children-in-law: David and Evelyn Ruhlin of Corpus Christi, TX; Kathleen and the late Bob Brennan of Pearland, TX; Kristina Decker of Richmond, TX; Bruce and Judy Ruhlin of Cypress, TX; Elizabeth and Tony

Hartzell of Fuquay-Varina, NC; Kurt and Amy Ruhlin of Duluth, GA; Michele and Grant Kenion of Easton, PA; Barbara and John Verrett of Baton Rouge, LA; Joseph and Brooke Ruhlin of Eden Prairie, MN; and Eric and Dhenu Ruhlin of Chicago, IL.

Her grandchildren: Alicia Gaither, Mary Brennan, Emily Brennan, Kerry Konczak, Brian Decker, Christopher Decker, Stephen Decker, Theresa Decker, Mike Ruhlin, Allison Cline, Jake Hartzell, Claire Ruhlin, Matthew Ruhlin, Gus Kenion, Bridget Kenion, Helen Kenion, William Verrett, Kelly Van Hoof, Colleen Verrett, Samuel Ruhlin, Rachel Ruhlin, Kathleen Ruhlin, Patrick Ruhlin, Jiya Ruhlin, and all their spouses and significant others and 12 great-grandchildren.

Visitation: Thursday, July 6, from 6 to 8PM, at Dettling Funeral Home, 14094 Memorial Dr, Houston, TX.

Funeral Mass: Friday, July 7, 10:30AM, at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 625 Nottingham Oaks Trail, Houston, TX.

Interment will follow the mass at Memorial Oaks Cemetery, 13001 Katy Fwy, Houston, TX.

In lieu of flowers a donation may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at [raise.stjude.org/joanruhlin](https://www.stjude.org/raise/stjude.org/joanruhlin).

The Funeral Mass will be livestreamed Friday, July 7, 2023 at 10:30 AM CST at this link:

<https://youtube.com/live/tvd8O4pmXmg?feature=share>

# Cemetery Details

## Memorial Oaks Cemetery

13001 Katy Freeway  
Houston, TX 77079

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 6. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Dettling Funeral Home  
14094 Memorial Drive  
Houston, TX 77079  
(281) 497-2121  
david@dettlingfuneral.com

## Rosary

JUL 6. 7:00 PM (CT)

Dettling Funeral Home  
14094 Memorial Drive  
Houston, TX 77079  
(281) 497-2121  
david@dettlingfuneral.com

## Eulogies

---

JUL 6. 7:30 PM (CT)

Dettling Funeral Home  
14094 Memorial Drive  
Houston, TX 77079  
(281) 497-2121  
david@dettlingfuneral.com

## Funeral Mass

---

JUL 7. 10:30 AM (CT)

St. John Vianney Catholic Church  
625 Nottingham Oaks Trail  
Houston, TX 77079  
(281) 497-1500

## Graveside Service following Holy Mass

---

JUL 7. 12:15 PM (CT)

Memorial Oaks Cemetery  
13001 Katy Freeway  
Houston, TX 77079

# Tribute Wall



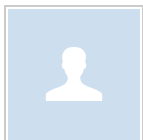
“ I have many memories of the Joan and Bill Ruhlin family through my parents lifelong friendship with them and growing up alongside their children in my early years. Mrs Ruhlin always had a smile for everyone. In recent years she embraced "facebook" and we kept in touch . I had not heard from her for awhile. I dreamed of Joan last night. We were surrounded by our families with nice fuzzy warm feelings. I looked her up on the internet this am and found she has been gone since last summer. Such a lovely woman that created loving memories with everyone she touched. With love to your family. Carol Reynolds Hallock

-----  
**Carol Hallock** - March 05, 2024 at 12:36 PM



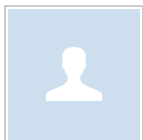
“ *Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin*

-----  
October 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM



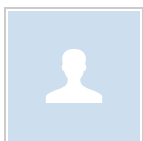
“ *Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin*

-----  
October 06, 2023 at 01:12 AM



“ *Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin*

-----  
October 05, 2023 at 09:45 AM



“ *Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin*

-----  
October 05, 2023 at 01:54 AM



“ *Your Light Shines* was purchased for the family of *Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin*.



July 06, 2023 at 12:03 PM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet* was purchased for the family of *Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin*.



July 06, 2023 at 11:36 AM



“ *Keisha S.* purchased a sympathy card for the family of *Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin*.



**Keisha S.** - July 06, 2023 at 09:49 AM



“ *John J Ruhlin Sons and Grandchildren* purchased the *Heavenly Heights Bouquet* for the family of *Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin*.



**John J Ruhlin Sons and Grandchildren** - July 06, 2023 at 08:45 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.



July 06, 2023 at 07:03 AM



“ What a beautiful obituary! She was a lovely woman. Early childhood memories for all of the Nelsons. Love and prayers to you all. Truly a life well lived with a beautiful legacy.

Tracy Simpson - July 06, 2023 at 12:53 AM



“ Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.



July 05, 2023 at 09:51 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.

July 05, 2023 at 09:51 PM



“ *Rose Garden Heart was purchased for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.*



---

July 05, 2023 at 06:47 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.*



---

July 05, 2023 at 04:47 PM



“ *Flanvell S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.*

---

**Flanvell S.** - July 05, 2023 at 03:16 PM

FS

“ To the family Kavanaugh Ruhlin ,  
I catch this sorry opportunity to express:

*first my regrets for the regular , warm , friendly and sincere contacts  
with both Joan and Bill which I miss already . Joan was the  
continuation of Bill .*

*secondly , my admiration for their succes for the close relations  
within such a big family . In this field mother's contribution is always  
prevailing .*

*You ' re both and will remain for ever in my memory*

*Chantal and Flandy Strul*

---

**Flandy Strul** - July 05, 2023 at 02:12 PM

RA

“ Rama A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joan Therese  
Kavanaugh Ruhlin.

---

**Rama A.** - July 05, 2023 at 12:47 PM

SS

“ Truly a life well lived. My prayers and condolences to all of the  
Ruhlin family.

---

**Stuart Schofield** - July 05, 2023 at 11:49 AM

LD

“ Love, Colleen Bracci and Donald DeWoody purchased the *A Full Life* for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.



---

**Love, Colleen Bracci and Donald DeWoody** - July 05, 2023 at 11:06 AM

LD

“ Love, Colleen Bracci and Donald DeWoody planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.

---

**Love, Colleen Bracci and Donald DeWoody** - July 05, 2023 at 11:06 AM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.



---

July 05, 2023 at 10:00 AM

AD

“ Alief ISD Nutrition Department purchased the *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.



---

**Alief ISD Nutrition Department** - July 05, 2023 at 08:59 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.*



---

July 05, 2023 at 08:53 AM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



---

**Eric Ruhlin** - July 05, 2023 at 12:34 AM



“ *4 files added to the tribute wall*



---

**Eric Ruhlin** - July 05, 2023 at 12:32 AM

ER

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Eric Ruhlin - July 05, 2023 at 12:21 AM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.



July 05, 2023 at 12:01 AM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin.



July 04, 2023 at 05:37 PM

FF

“ Florence Fiedler lit a candle in memory of Joan Therese Kavanaugh Ruhlin



Florence Fiedler - July 04, 2023 at 01:58 PM



“ *To my dear friend.*  
*Love,*  
*Florence Fiedler*

---

**Florence Fiedler** - July 04, 2023 at 01:55 PM