

## **In Loving Memory of Carole Raye Kirsako Bartko**

*April 10, 1941 – April 8, 2025*



Carole Raye Kirsako Bartko passed away peacefully just two days before her 84th birthday, leaving behind a legacy defined by grace, warmth, and enduring connection. A cherished member of the skating community and a beloved friend to many, Carole's life was filled with elegance, generosity, and deep-rooted friendships that spanned decades.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Carole began skating early and quickly found joy and belonging on the ice. Her talent and presence led her to the Ice Capades, where she performed from 1961 to 1967—an experience she treasured for the rest of her life. The friendships formed during those years remained among her most valued, and Carole was the heart of that extended family—keeping in touch, organizing reunions, and reminding us all of the importance of staying connected.

After the show, Carole worked as an administrative assistant at LTV Steel, and later moved to Cleveland with her beloved husband, Joe. Though her professional path shifted, her passion for skating never waned. She remained active with both the Pittsburgh and Cleveland Skating Clubs, where she was a loyal presence and a steady supporter of the sport she loved.

Carole had a vibrant life beyond skating as well. She was an accomplished dancer and performed for many years with a local Cleveland group. Her love for animals ran deep—so much so that she worked in a veterinary clinic after retiring and was affectionately known in her neighborhood as the “dog whisperer.” She brought that same kindness and intuitive care to her friendships, always thoughtful, always generous.

Her presence was magnetic—equal parts elegance and ease. Whether enjoying a favorite Cosmopolitan, sharing stories with friends, or simply being the one to pick up the phone and check in, Carole had a way of making people feel seen, valued, and remembered.

Predeceased by her husband Joseph Bartko, Carole leaves behind a community of dear friends who will carry her memory with love and gratitude. She was the one who held us together, the one who never let time or distance get in the way of a good friendship.

We will miss her terribly—but we are better for having known her. And we will continue to honor her by staying close, showing up for each other, and living with the same grace and generosity she showed us all.

With love and light,  
Chris, Terri and Jewel