



Joan Suarez

FEB 8, 1938 - FEB 25, 2026



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Joan Suarez passed away on Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at The Quarters at Des Peres in Des Peres, Missouri at the age of 88.

Joan was born on February 8, 1938 in Fertile, Minnesota to the late Phillip and Mildred Kilpatrick. She is also preceded in death by her loving husband, Joseph J. Suarez.

Joan is survived by her daughters: Patricia (Roger) Gray and Rebecca (Charles) Oldani; grandchildren: Joseph (Stacy) Gray, Jennifer (Steve) Bettag, and Charles Oldani; and great-grandchildren: Jackson Gray, Stella Gray, Scarlett Gray, and Bella Bettag.

She was a loving aunt, cousin, and friend to many.

Joan began work as an Education Director for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in 1962, and later became an International Vice-President of Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union, now known as UNITE HERE. She later became a leader in Missouri Jobs with Justice, where she began Bread and Roses as a project that later led to its establishment as an independent non-profit in 2015.

Joan envisioned Bread & Roses Missouri as a platform for working people to tell their stories and voice their concerns through the arts. She created the Youth Initiative and our Workers' Opera, and commissioned the plays about the history of the Labor Movement, including Jailbird and Mrs. Palmer's Honey. Though she retired as Executive Director in 2021, she remained involved to the end as Bread & Roses Founder Emeritus.

Per her wishes, Joan was donated to Logan University in Chesterfield, Missouri to help the advancement of Medicine.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be given to Bread & Roses, Missouri or the American Kidney Foundation.



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Services by Hughes Funeral Alternatives in St. Louis, Missouri. Friends and family can sign an online guestbook at <https://www.HughesFA.com>



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Joan by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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