

# SUZANNE MARY (DRAKE) ZITELLI



Of Pittsburgh, age 75, was a creative and versatile woman who died February 25, 2025. She was born in Ohio and came to the University of Pittsburgh to obtain a degree in medical technology. Suzanne worked briefly in a bacteriology laboratory but then became a homemaker and mother of four children for 23 years. During that time, she became interested in Shakespeare and challenged the East

Catholic Middle School to permit her, as a volunteer, to have 7th and 8th graders perform full length Shakespearean plays.

At age 48, she obtained her master's degree in education and was employed by East Catholic School to teach 7th and 8th grade language arts. Sue continued with the Shakespearean plays and over her career performed 34 productions with 14 different plays. Several of those students went on to Broadway or other theater related careers.

Suzanne also was recognized for her excellence in teaching. She was awarded the Golden Apple Award after only six years of teaching. Her 8th grade students far exceeded the national average in reading, as they achieved 12th grade or beyond reading levels. Suzanne employed unusual techniques in her classroom, such as organizing her room as a circle rather than rows of desks to enhance discussion and debate. Suzanne always encouraged reading beginning at the youngest ages for students and her grandchildren.

Outside of the classroom, Suzanne engaged in numerous activities involving nature and beauty. She loved her garden of flowers, always having fresh cut flowers on the table.

Suzanne enjoyed snorkeling and visiting national parks to bathe in the beauty of the world around her.

She is survived by her loving husband, Dr. Basil Zitelli; and four devoted children Matthew (Margi) Zitelli of OH, Daniel (Trina) Zitelli of Squirrel Hill, Benjamin (Elizabeth) Zitelli of MD and Anne (Anthony) Zitelli of MD.

Suzanne was the treasured grandmother of Devin and Alexa Zitelli; Viviana and Isabel Zitelli; Taylor Zitelli; Olivia and Owen Dottavio.

Suzanne was the dear sister of Dorothy (Ed) Krasinski of NY, Robert (Mary Fran) Drake of Transfer, PA, James (Lea) Drake of OH, Jeffrey (Kathy) Drake of OH and the late Walter (surviving spouse, Judy) Drake.

Suzanne lived a full and rewarding life and contributed in many ways to the education of children, as well as the appreciation of nature and the world around us. She will be missed.

All are welcome on Friday from 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. at **PATRICK T. LANIGAN FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY, INC.**, 1111 Monroeville Ave., Turtle Creek, PA 15145, (412) 823-9350.

Mass of Christian Burial will be in St. Maurice Church (St. Joseph the Worker Parish) on Saturday at 1 p.m. with Fr. John Skirtich as celebrant.

Suzanne will be laid to rest in St. Mary Cemetery on Penn Avenue.

Memorial donations may be made to the Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, 1 N. Linden St., Duquesne, PA 15110 ([www.pittsburghfoodbank.org](http://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org)) or Catholic Charities, Diocese of Pittsburgh, 111 Boulevard of the Allies, Pgh., PA 15222 ([www.ccpgh.org](http://www.ccpgh.org))

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