

Bing L. Santamour – In Memoriam

(1949-2016)

Bing L. Santamour was born the ninth child to William Pete, Sr. and Cecelia Vaska Pete in Bethel, Alaska on March 22, 1949. She was preceded in death by her parents, brothers: George Pete, Joe Pete, Fred Pete, Sr. (wife Betty Pete) and William “Billy” Pete of Eek. Sisters: Mary Romer (spouse Carlie Romer) and Carol Pete Janko.

She is survived by her son Seth and daughter Tyrene Santamour and five grandchildren: Ariel, Serg, Sylus, Hunter, and David. Her siblings are: Evelyn Elliott, Jimmy Pete, Sr., Margaret Chaney, Linda Joule and Gary Pete, Sr.

She has countless nieces and nephews and knew everybody’s birthday, anniversary or what or who needed help. Small gifts, knitted socks or crocheted things would appear in the mail or a special day card or postcard would appear as often as “hugs” she sent to sisters or brothers via people she just met.

Recently, she loved her telephone texting and kept in touch with many of her family and friends near and far. She treasured her friends, her relatives and her many hobbies. Holistic healing, energy work and reflexology brought her a satisfaction in truly healing and helping people find comfort.

She served the community of Bethel well and was proud to be from Bethel. And oh – she loved her cup of tea.

Bing grew up in Bethel back in the days when there were only about 800 people in town. The neighborhood kids all knew each other, as well as the parents and remained friends all of their lives. She attended Copper Valley School for a year and lived with her sister, Mary Romer, in California for a year until moving back home to Bethel for her senior year.

She worked for the UAF Upward Bound Students – and that first inspired her to encourage many rural students to finish school. She provided support in many ways to higher education students throughout their college years when she worked at AVCP as the Higher Education Director. She cared and interacted strongly with “her” campus. She would often bring dry or frozen, fish and berries to students and families on campus who were terribly homesick.

Bing had hundreds of students who credited her for being instrumental in completing their college and training. She would show up and check on them on a routine basis, always with encouraging words to persist. Her interaction was positive, meaningful, and encouraging. If students were struggling, she knew it and would keep in touch. The respect was mutual.

Everyone knew Bing. She had a love for being daring and pushed herself to achieve and experience many things . . . and challenged herself. She was into just about everything, and not afraid of anything! Each experience brought her something new to share.

One of her college highlights was traveling in Europe with her sister Linda for three weeks. Thus began her love of travel and she went to China, Scotland, Denmark, Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Her pictures, even in Europe, she was good at making friends quickly despite language barriers. She had a way with people and would make all people, young and old, feel welcome and special.

In her later years, Bing worked on her healing gift – she was a strong and supportive member of Wisdom of the Grandmothers for over thirty years. She served as a tribal judge, a part time city clerk, a volunteer in many non-profit, tribal and statewide organizations and shared her caring with the whole community and church.

The family would like to thank ONC, BNC, and countless members of the community who have helped our family get through this time with prayers, food and service. We are eternally grateful for being there for us, and especially for Bing.