



Debi Lu McLey

March 27, 1954 - April 29, 2026

Debra Lu McLey passed away at home early Wednesday morning, April 29, 2026 surrounded by her husband Curt McLey, son Eric McLey and three cats, Quincy, Chelsea, and M.B.

Debi was born in Beech Grove, Indiana on March 27, 1954 to Vernon and Betty Shiffer and was their only child. She cared deeply for her Mom and Dad who loved and nurtured their little girl as she grew up in Omaha, Nebraska. Debi attended Omaha North for a year where she was the only freshman in the senior choir, then Notre Dame Academy, an all-girls Catholic high school which closed in 1974.

Deb had many childhood pets which were smaller than a breadbox, but she ended up in a hot water when she cooked up a scheme to buy a horse named Brandy. The horse bridle and other horse paraphernalia in Deb's trunk prompted a few questions from Mom Shiffer.

Debi met the love of her life – Curt McLey – who was a disc jockey at 59/WOW in 1979. It all started when this young lady called to find out where she could pick up the album won from a prior jock (Energy by the Pointer Sisters). Curt answered the phone and the two ended up talking for almost an hour.

Upon asking, Deb gave Curt a phone number, which turned out to be the phone of the male friend she was with at the time. After several fruitless attempts, eventually Curt convinced the guy to give Debi his phone number and she finally called him. Curt couldn't have known that the lady on the phone was a super model, but that she was. His interest was based on something intangible and intuitive, but he couldn't deny that she was a beautiful lady when they finally met. The two were married by Reverend Dick Smith on Mother's Day, May 11, 1980.

Deb formed Music in Motion with Curt, a mobile music service in Altoona, Iowa with a staff of disc jockeys who played the music for weddings, proms, homecomings, and college parties. Deb operated the company while Curt worked full-time radio. The McLeys used the proceeds from selling Music in Motion as a down payment on their home in Omaha.

On December 4th, 1983, God blessed Curt and Deb with their only child, Eric Michael McLey, who was born on Curt's birthday. Debi wasn't sure how to be the mother to a bouncing baby boy, but she figured it out, and they became best friends. If ever there was a mama's boy, it would be Eric McLey. The two spoke virtually every day until the very end.

Early on Deb was employed by The Yard Company where she cared for the many animals kept for the enjoyment of the public. Among her favorites were a toucan named Fruitloop and a cockatoo named Brutus, but she loved them all.

Those who know Deb best know that this was a perfect position for her. She is the consummate animal lover and protector, devoting endless hours volunteering for Raptor Recovery and other local organizations as well as financially supporting the Nebraska Humane Society, Alley Cat Rescue, ASPCA and many others.

Deb was an equal opportunity animal supporter. Animals didn't have to be cute and conventionally beautiful to warrant her attention. In fact, she was a supporter of the underdog animals: possums, squirrels, and strays, which she often nursed to health and placed with good homes or kept, as in the cases of Buddy and Buffy. At the end of the year as Curt organized tax documents, he was often bemused by the diversity of animal organizations to which Deb contributed. He needled her gently when he noticed the generous contribution to Donkey Rescue, but let it go because to Deb, all animals were worthy of love including the birds she fed on her deck everyday rain or shine.

On some days, Deb also liked human beings (or so she would often say tongue in cheek). Deb and Curt sacked groceries at the Episcopal Church in downtown Omaha for Together, Inc. for several years, an organization that delivered those groceries to the needy in our community. Other favorite charities supported by Deb and Curt have been the Open Door Mission, Salvation Army, and St Stephen's House. Early in their marriage, Deb and Curt sang Christmas carols at local nursing homes.

True to her generous spirit, in the Christmas of 2025, Deb suggested that the two forego Christmas presents to each other and compile a list of favorite charitable organizations to which they would donate funds typically spent on gifts to each other to those worthy organizations. And that's what they did.

Deb would be the first to tell you that her kind heart came from God. She had a desire to serve God by loving people and animals well. While raised as a Catholic, Deb preferred to be known as a Follower of Christ. Her heart was compassionate and kind. Deb and Curt shared coffee daily over Bible reading and devotions to begin most mornings.

Deb was employed by Horseshoe Casino for 26 years. She stayed so long because she loved her coworkers: Steve, Tammy, Jo, Henry, Dena, Molly, Kris, Jim, LeeAnn, Brian, and so many others. Deb started as a cashier then later worked as a Cashier Supervisor as well as in the count room. Some of those friends spent time with Deb in the final days of her life.

Debi was known for her quick wit, infectious laughter, and unflinching kindness. As evidenced by the number of young people who called her “Mom” through the years, nurturing came naturally to her.

Debi was preceded in death by her Father Vernon Shiffer and Mother Betty Shiffer and her father-in-law Jack McLey and mother-in-law Coleen McLey, and brother-in-law Mark McLey. She is survived by her husband Curt McLey, son Eric McLey, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Bill and LeeAnn Wilcox and Scott and Stella McLey, sister-in-law Ann McLey, cousins, nieces, nephews, and many friends.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 8. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Reichmuth Funeral Home - Omaha / Elkhorn
21901 W. Maple Rd.
P.O. Box 711
Elkhorn, NE 68022
402-289-2222
services@reichmuthfuneralhomes.com
<https://www.reichmuthfuneralhomes.com/>

Celebration of Life Service

MAY 8. 7:00 PM (CT)

Reichmuth Funeral Home - Omaha / Elkhorn
21901 W. Maple Rd.
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Elkhorn, NE 68022
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<https://www.reichmuthfuneralhomes.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ Reichmuth Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Debi Lu McLey



Reichmuth Funeral Home - May 07 at 04:42 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Debi Lu McLey.



May 08 at 09:17 AM



“ Jeffery Kelley and Kate Hazelton purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Debi Lu McLey.



Jeffery Kelley and Kate Hazelton - May 05 at 07:05 PM



“ *Heavenly and Harmony was purchased for the family of Debi Lu McLey.*



May 05 at 12:12 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Debi Lu McLey.*



May 05 at 11:17 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Debi Lu McLey.*

May 05 at 11:17 AM



“ *Annie, Bill and Family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Debi Lu McLey.*



Annie, Bill and Family - May 04 at 08:42 PM

WG

“ Wendy Fisher Grimm purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Debi Lu McLey.



Wendy Fisher Grimm - May 04 at 12:07 PM

WG

“ Wendy Fisher Grimm planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debi Lu McLey.

Wendy Fisher Grimm - May 04 at 12:07 PM

JH

“ Jo and Dennis Hanson purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Debi Lu McLey.



Jo and Dennis Hanson - May 04 at 10:18 AM

JN

“ Julie and Tomas Negrete purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Debi Lu McLey.



Julie and Tomas Negrete - May 03 at 10:19 PM

JN

“ Julie and Tomas Negrete planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Debi Lu McLey.

Julie and Tomas Negrete - May 03 at 10:19 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of *Debi Lu McLey*.



May 02 at 04:14 PM



“ *Judy and I are so sorry for your loss. We will miss Debi's warm smile, neighborly chats, her generosity, and the reminders for me to be sure to help myself to the Lilacs each spring. She was a joy to have as a friend and neighbor.*

Bob McMaster - May 02 at 04:01 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray* was purchased for the family of *Debi Lu McLey*.



May 01 at 11:06 AM