



# Pati Cates

OCT 15, 1953 - MAY 11, 2025



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# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 5
<b>Media</b> .....	Page 7



## **Pati Cates**

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### *Celebrating the Life of Pati Cates*

Pati was born in Rapid City, South Dakota, the second child of James and Ouida Maxwell. She earned a Master of Education degree from the University of North Dakota; her major field and her professional life were in Early Childhood Education. She retired after 40 years of teaching young children and teachers of young children. In retirement, one of her favorite activities was watching her children become exceptional adults and watching her grandson grow.

Pati and Richard were married in North Dakota and enjoyed 48 years of better and worse, richer and poorer, in sickness and in health. They loved and cherished each other until Pati went to be with her parents and the Lord.

Jim and Susie Maxwell,

Pati was our sister, Jim's by birth and Susie's by marriage, and we loved her with all our hearts. Pati was a generous, kind, nurturing, loving person and a great friend to have in anyone's life. She was a bright spirit with a happy laugh and a fabulous smile. Not to forget a great cook. We will miss her every day, but know with her faith that she has moved on to a beautiful place.

Anne Thomson,

There are so many beautiful things about Mom - her kindness, generosity, fun, intelligence. She loved fiercely and cared gently. She was the consummate educator, teaching even when she didn't mean to be.

I loved all her laughs - I feel like she had a different laugh for every circumstance she laughed at. I get told often that I laugh like her and I always consider that a compliment.

I loved her compassion and grace - she always made space for me to share what was happening in my life and to sit with me in it, to love me through it, and to give advice when I needed it.



## Obituary

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There are so many memories that are incredible memories that I can't pick from them. I think it will take awhile to sort through them and decide what I want to keep for myself and what I am willing to share.

James Cates,

What they said.... That was the first thing that came to mind when my Dad asked me to write this. He laughed, Anne laughed, and both agreed Mom would have laughed as well. But she deserves more.

I can't adequately put into words what she deserves. She was my first teacher, my guardian and protector, my avid fan and staunch supporter, and my friend. She was my mom. She was so much more than all of that. I will miss her more than I thought could be possible. But she no longer has to worry about migraines or back pain or whether she accidentally ate too much gluten. She is in a far better place than this and I will see her again one day.

Richard Cates,

Pati loved, among so many things, butterflies. I saw this last week:

Butterflies rest when it rains

because it damages their wings.

It's okay to rest during the storms of life.

You will fly again when it's over.

Pati went to be with the Lord on Mother's Day. No day on the calendar could be more appropriate. Pati was, above all else, a mother. She put her heart and soul and remarkable abilities into being a mom to Anne and Jim and a grandma to Alexander. She took her knowledge and skills to another level in providing the very best education and example to hundreds of Early Childhood students, from the young children in her care to the future teachers under her tutelage. Nurturing children and showing others how to nurture them was at the center of her life. It was a beautiful life extraordinarily well lived. I am blessed to have experienced this firsthand. I am the grateful recipient of the best of her gifts and efforts. Fly again, Patijeane Maxwell Cates; your storms are over.



# Tribute Wall

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**Patricia Epperhart** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.



Pati was such a dear friend, mentor, and encourager. Our years together in the 80s and 90s were full of family vacations together, church fellowships and Sunday nights at Dairy Queen. Pati invited me to come to her classroom weekly to teach Spanish to her students, which gave me the inspiration to teaching Spanish full time when we moved to Arkansas. I could always count on her for advice, wisdom, and respect to be the best that I could be. She was there for me during my battle with cancer, organizing a "meal train" before that was even a thing. She started our annual neighborhood July 4th parade creating fond memories for our family of friends. She trusted me to teach piano to her children and even left Jim with me to extend his stay on a Colorado ski trip. I admired her so much and especially her devotion to Richard. I have missed her greatly since we moved away so many years ago, but she'll always have a special place in my heart. Patricia Epperhart

June 3 at 2:36 PM



**Cassie Williams** posted:

I had privilege of being one of Pati "Cakes" students in kindergarten and it was the most magical year. I remember her alphabet characters she would hide around the classroom and it was so fun to find them. Most of all, I remember how Pati made me feel - so special and important, even at such a young age. ☐

May 25 at 5:59 PM



**Barbara Smith** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.



Pati Cates was an educator, supervisor, colleague, advocate for children and their families, and my very dear friend. In what seemed to be a lifetime acquaintance was merely the joy of knowing and working closely with someone who truly understood the growth and development of young children. I have known Pati Cates for over twenty five years and I know that she will be missed. Pati had such a profound impression on the young teachers that she taught each year. She had a way of presenting herself not just in the lab school but in the classroom and in public as a professional Early Childhood educator. She loved to research and share her latest findings with her staff and college students. She believed that adults should behave and be treated as adults, and that children should be respected and treated as children. Pati may not have adorned a visible cape as she led her staff through several national accreditation and re-accreditation, and continued to be rated as a four star environment given by the Texas Rising Start organization. Her pink poncho and red lipstick did the job. Barbara Smith

May 21 at 7:37 PM




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**Patricia Malott** posted:

Mrs. Pati was so very loving and family oriented. You knew she wanted everyone to succeed! She poured her heart and soul into everything she did! I was blessed to have had her as my instructor and supervisor. She loved who she was and loved what she did for others! And yes she was an awesome cook. This beautiful lady will truly be missed. But I'm sure she will continue to share her self for ever! Thanks Pati Cates for all you have done for me! Lots of to her family. Pat Malott 

May 22 at 7:02 AM



**Philip Hinz** posted:

So sorry to hear of Pati's passing. Directly after Anne and mine's college years, I remember visiting their home frequently...and watching the new 'Lost' episode(s). With that, came dinners at times. I remember her smile and how she was always so willing to sit, talk, and just naturally offer her advice...no matter the topic.

May 21 at 7:58 PM



**Karen Nichols-Hutto** posted:

Sending you all my love. Having worked for Pati for so many years there are so many wonderful memories. Pati was a wonderful cook and baker and she always treated us with delicious pies, her chocolate sheet cake, and her friendship tea. Ironically, my mother also passed away 2 days before Mother's Day, and I will never forget her kindness in allowing me time off from work to spend time with my mom before and after she passed. Pati was like a mother to me and I will remember her always.

May 21 at 7:37 PM



Patricia Epperhart shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

June 3 at 2:36 PM





Barbara Smith shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

May 22 at 4:28 PM





# Memories only last if you share them

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



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