



# Jennifer Marie Ratkowiak

MAY 9, 1973 - NOV 29, 2025



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HAWAIIAN  
MEMORIAL PARK MORTUARY  
AT VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES

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# Jennifer Marie Ratkowiak

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## In Loving Memory of Jennifer Marie Ratkowiak

May 9, 1973 to November 11, 2014 to November 29, 2025

It is with deep sorrow and profound love, we announce the passing of Jennifer Marie Ratkowiak, a cherished wife, mother, daughter, sister, and friend, who left this world peacefully on Saturday, November 29, 2025, at the age of 52 after a courageous journey through many medical challenges. She was surrounded by the unwavering love of her husband and children in her passing. Jennifer leaves behind Casmer, her devoted husband of 27 years, and their beloved children, Emily and John.

Jennifer was born on May 9, 1973 to Barbara Cassatt Boone, and John Dunlap Boone Jr., who predeceased her in 2017. She is also survived by her loving stepmother, Sandi Boone, who became a steady source of guidance and comfort throughout Jen's life. Jen grew up the youngest of two, always admiring her older brother Michael Boone as they navigated childhood together. She is also survived by her stepbrother Jamey Collins, and was preceded in death by her older stepsister Kemberli Bennett in 2011. She is survived by her mother-in-law Emily Morrow, brother-in-law Frankie Ratkowiak, several nieces and nephews including Logan Dear, Wynter Ratkowiak, and Eric and Michelle Boone. She is also survived by many deeply influential aunts, uncles, and extended family members who helped shape her remarkable spirit.

Jen's greatest joy was her family - John, Emily, and Casmer - who will forever cherish her love, warmth, guidance, unwavering support, and witty humor. She had a gift for laughter, often teasing her husband's inability to navigate in and out of a parking lot let alone find a good parking spot, or to make a decision about what to eat for dinner, or where to sit out and enjoy sunset. Jen will be remembered for her beautiful smile, selflessness, creativity, nurturing of her two children, and devotion to her husband.



## Obituary

**Jennifer Marie Ratkowiak**

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Growing up, Jen held fond memories of many outdoor adventures and hikes with her father and brother which inspired her love of nature. Finding new love, her father happily remarried Sandi, whom he met during his career with the NSA. Sandi had been a guiding light for Jen, whom she fondly saw as a second mother, as she offered Jen comfort, wisdom, and encouragement through life's highs and lows, especially after her father passed away in 2017. Jen's upbringing and early years reinforced her deep commitment to creating a loving, supportive home for her own family.

Jen met Casmer in October 1996 while he was attending the Naval Academy in Annapolis. Cas was immediately captivated, and Jen quickly warmed up to him when she discovered their shared childhood experiences. After falling deeply in love, they married in Pensacola, Florida, first in an intimate justice-of-the-peace ceremony on February 25, 1998, and then in a joyful celebration with family on December 19, 1998.

Together they built a life rich in love and adventure, moving often as Cas's military career brought them across the map. They traveled to Meridian, MS, where Emily was born in March 2000, to Virginia Beach, VA, where John was born in February 2001, and then to San Diego, CA; Kaneohe, HI; Corpus Christi, TX; Okinawa, Japan; Stafford, VA; Gulf Breeze, FL; and finally back "home" to Kailua, Oahu, HI, where Jen felt the greatest peace. Each move added new friends, new memories, and new communities that embraced Jen's kindness and warmth. Blessed to be a mother of two, Jen focused her life and energy on her family, pausing her bachelor's degree and embarking on a career of service as her path continued.

Jen tackled challenges head on, however great or small. With the events of the early 2000s, Cas's career kept him busy and deployed away from home for much of their children's early years, and Jen met the challenges of parenting with extraordinary grace. Over the course of two decades, Jen navigated her family through twelve different homes, as Emily and John grew into their high school years. She cultivated love and stability in each home, ensuring her family remained connected to extended families across Florida, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Jen devoted herself wholeheartedly to her children and shared her passions of arts and crafts, photography, scrapbooking, gardening, card games, movies, and music with her family wherever life sent them. She also immersed herself in their schools and communities, becoming a beloved presence among teachers, parents, and friends, offering laughter, care, and support to all.



## Obituary

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Jennifer showed great resilience through significant health challenges, particularly during her years in Florida, when several complex conditions began to compound. She faced every challenge with courage, dignity, and an unwavering commitment to her family.

On November 11, 2014, Jennifer died for 8 minutes, after she went into septic shock and suffered multiorgan failure stemming from an uncultured urinary infection. By the grace of God and prayers of family and friends, she defied all medical odds and woke up from a medically induced coma a week later and was eventually transported to a rehabilitation facility. In rehab, she learned how to write again, walk again, and how to do many other basic tasks. She was released from rehab just in time for Christmas, returning home with a wheelchair and walker on December 23, 2014. She weathered those stormy seas with her strength and the support of her loved ones. This experience inspired her lifelong advocacy for sepsis awareness, education, and prevention, a mission she carried with deep conviction. She called November 11th her “second birthday” and continued forward in life with the motto: let every day be a special one, since we aren’t guaranteed tomorrow.

With her fighting spirit, she gifted her loved ones 11 more years and 18 days; each day being a special one.

As her children transitioned to college, Jen renewed her long-held dream of completing her education. She earned her Associate Degree in Paralegal Studies and hoped to continue her law studies, often expressing interest in pairing her work with her studies in Japanese - something she admired about her late father who had an affinity for foreign languages. She began outlining a book about sepsis survival and self-advocacy, compiling ideas and stories through each medical battle over the years. In Hawaii, she looked forward to working with children, substitute teaching, and becoming an officiant so that people of all abilities and identities could feel welcomed and supported on their wedding day.

When Jen and Cas returned to Oahu, a place that had long felt like home, she embraced a renewed focus on her physical, medical, and spiritual well-being. Yet her health began to decline further as she faced increased mobility challenges, necrotic bone issues in her feet, neuropathy, and severe kyphosis. Still, she persisted with physical and occupational therapy, repeating her father’s saying often of “if you don’t use it, you’ll lose it” for encouragement. She continued preparing for her substitute teacher certification and looked forward to Hawaii’s annual whale counts, which she loved doing with Cas.



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Despite daunting medical obstacles, Jen adapted, persevered, and met each day with courage and upheld her core belief of serving others first. She consistently reminded her family that no matter how difficult things were, she could do anything she set her mind to. She also found joy in the simple gifts of island life: sunrise beach walks, watching waves and wildlife, attending church, admiring colorful mailboxes, and taking in the warmth of the island.

Jennifer passed peacefully with her husband and children by her side at Queen's Medical Center. She advocated for herself through the end, making the brave decision to enter comfort care over intubation Friday night before her passing. She shared many beautiful moments with her family Friday evening and Saturday morning. She spent her final moments outside breathing in the fresh Hawaiian air and feeling the beams of the Hawaiian sun on her skin. She took her final breath held closely by the people she cherished most, her family. She was then met in heaven with a hug by her father, John, where she will continue on her days happily and without pain.

Jennifer's life was defined by fierce love, steadfast resilience, boundless compassion, and a heart that always placed others first. She fought bravely, loved deeply, and leaves behind a legacy that will endure through all whose lives she touched.

A Celebration of Life will be held on the Island of Oahu, at Valley of the Temples Trousdale Chapel beginning at 9am with a broadcast option and recording made available for friends and family on the mainland.

Emily and John kindly request letters with stories, photos, and reflections about their mother be sent to: 78 Mahealani Place, Kailua, HI 96734 or by email to [ratkowiakfamily@gmail.com](mailto:ratkowiakfamily@gmail.com).

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to <https://www.sepsis.org> in Jennifer's honor. She dedicated herself to educating others about sepsis, reminding everyone to insist on urine cultures when UTIs are suspected and advocating for more accessible education and stronger sepsis protocols for both individuals and medical professionals.




## Events


**Jennifer Marie Ratkowiak**

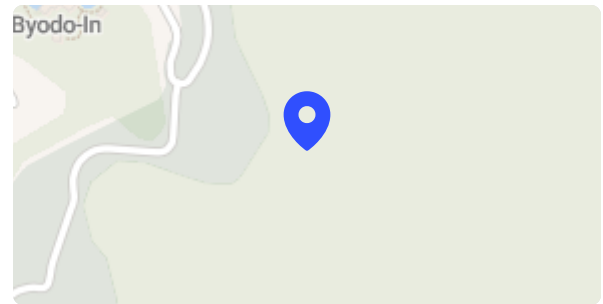
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### Chapel Service

 **Friday**, January 2, 2026

 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM HST

 **Valley of the Temples Trousdale Chapel**  
47-200 Kahekili Hwy., Kaneohe HI 96744





## Tribute Wall

**Jennifer Marie Ratkowiak**

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**Logan Dear** shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Jen was such a giving and considerate person. She wanted to make everything so big and special for everyone. Birthdays, celebrations of any kind really, my first time to Hawaii with them was unforgettable for many reasons, but Jen was always educating me about Hawaiian customs and traditions. Even with little stuff like the different Hawaiian trees, certain beaches. Everywhere had a memory for her. These photos are from that trip. Sunrise at Lanikai and Sunset through the mountains in Kailua. The first time I saw that exact sunset was when I was riding in the car Jen with Jen on this trip, I remember thinking it was one of the most beautiful views I'd ever seen, and I'll always associate that sunset view with her. She was one of the easiest people to talk to. I could talk to her for hours, Emily and John really inherited that from her. They listen so intentionally, and so did Jen. I got to spend a good bit of one on one time with Jen in June of 2024, when I visited to help out after a procedure. Leaving the airport was unfortunately the last time I saw her, and I'm so happy I gave her a big hug. I know we will see each other again one day, I just know you're having an Aloha time in heaven. I love you and can't wait to see you again some day, til then we will continue to spread Aloha for you.



December 8 at 12:41 PM



**Emily Ratkowiak** posted:

Her laughs always made me smile.

December 4 at 9:13 PM



**Savannah Moore** posted:

I remember when we were living in Stafford and would go to Emily's for sleepovers, Jen was always the fun mom. She'd get us every snack imaginable, let us watch scary movies, and made sure we had the best time! She was such a light. I remember her being so kind and always sharing the most interesting stories about her childhood and the things she'd experienced. There was one story that we would make her tell time and time again and she would time and time again! She will truly be missed.

December 4 at 3:45 PM



# Tribute Wall

**Jennifer Marie Ratkowiak**

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**Ana Decesare** lit a candle in honor of Jennifer.

Ms. Jen had the most beautiful heart and spirit. Her infectious kindness is something I admire deeply and strive to hold center in my own life. In every interaction I had with her, I came away inspired to make other people feel as wonderful as she left me feeling. I am so grateful to have been able to share dinners and sunsets with her, and I am so grateful for her resilient family. I know she taught Emily and John how to lead with the utmost grace and humility, alongside humor and overall, greatness. It is how I became friends with them both, individually. My favorite memories with Jennifer include me and John's college graduation dinner, which included both the Ratkowiak and DeCesare clans, and every moment of my visit with her on the island of Oahu in 2024. Thank you, Jen, for reminding me in my moments around you and beyond, that what matters the most in one's life is how you make others feel. The impact you made is felt by me and all others lucky enough to know you. Sending all my love, Ana



December 4 at 10:49 AM



**Theresa Andre** lit a candle in honor of Jennifer.

Although heaven just got a lot brighter, our world feels much dimmer. Jen was a special lady who showered our world with love and gentle kindness. God bless her and her love ones. A hui hou kakou, Aunt Terry



December 4 at 3:08 PM



**Julie Decesare** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Sending love and prayers to the Ratkowiak Family -this photo is from our UNC DUKE graduation dinner - Jen made sure that Hawaii was represented with the gorgeous Hawaiian Lei's ❤️



December 4 at 10:49 AM



**Media**

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**Logan Dear** shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

December 8 at 12:41 PM





## Media

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**Julie Decesare** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

December 4 at 10:49 AM





# Memories only last if you share them

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



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