



Elizabeth Bessette

September 28, 1944 - September 13, 2023

Elizabeth Linda Kantack Bessette “Liz” was born September 28, 1944, to Frank and Odella in Clifton, Kansas. She grew up on a farm in an environment that taught discipline, hard work, faith in Jesus, and the importance of family. Liz attended school in Clifton and graduated from Clifton High School in 1962. She then attended Marymount College in Salina and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in May 1967. She started her career as a registered nurse in Salina at St. John’s hospital.

During her senior year of high school, she met and fell in love with Jerry Patrick Bessette. They were united in marriage on October 29, 1966, in Clifton. Soon thereafter, Jerry was relocated, and Liz began work in Topeka, Kansas at St. Francis Hospital. Liz stayed there for the next 45 years working in multiple roles including ICU Nurse Manager, House Supervisor, and Assistant Director of Nursing. She spent the last 10 years of her career doing some of her finest work at St. Francis as the first Nurse Navigator for patients with cancer in the state of Kansas.

Liz retired from St. Francis Hospital in 2014 but continued her service to the community as a volunteer in the both the gift shop, working alongside her husband Jerry, and in the surgery waiting area. Both Jerry and Liz were recognized for their contributions to the community at the St. Francis Caritas Ball in 2015.

Liz was a woman of deep, wonderful faith. As a devout Catholic, Liz was a founding member of Christ the King Catholic Church and served as a eucharistic minister. She participated in weekly adoration in the wee hours of Tuesday mornings ever since its inception. Liz's hobbies included daily mass and prayers, sharing coffee with friends on her porch, daily rosary reflections and traveling to visit grandchildren in North Carolina and Kansas City, as well as relatives located throughout Kansas and Nebraska. However, as anyone who had the gift of crossing paths with Liz knew, her #1 hobby was service. She was most happy sharing her time and talent in the service of others. Her generosity was overwhelming and endless. She lived and gave life to the motto "You never get less than what you give." Her treasured mission on Earth was to make saints of as many people as possible.

Liz was preceded in death by her parents, Frank and Odella; two infant sisters, Catherine and Cecilia, an infant brother, Franklin, and an older brother, Gayle. Those family members who survive Liz's death are a testament to the significance of Liz's life. Liz held numerous roles and titles and has positively impacted so many people's lives. She left a positive mark on every life she touched.

Liz was a wife, survived by her husband of 57 years, Jerry. Liz was a mother, survived by her daughter, Angela, and her son, Jeffrey. Liz was a mother-in-law, survived by her son-in-law Michael and daughter-in-law Deborah. Liz was a grandmother, survived by six grandsons, Matthew, Sean, Christopher, Jacob, Ethan, and Benjamin. Liz was a sister, survived by eight sisters and one brother, Janet, Theresa, Marilyn, Mike, Emagene, Carolyn, Donna, Zita, and Michele. Liz was a sister-in-law survived by four brothers-in-law and one sisters-in-law. Liz was an aunt, survived by 34 nieces and nephews.

Elizabeth Linda Kantack Bessette...To all the friends and family who knew

her, cared for her and loved her, she will be dearly missed but never forgotten!
May she Rest in Peace.

Visitation will be 4 to 7 p.m. Friday, September 15, 2023, at Christ the King Catholic Church, 5973 SW 25th Street, Topeka KS 66614, where a Rosary will be prayed at 7 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 16, 2023, at the Church. Entombment will follow in Mount Calvary Cemetery.

Condolences may be sent online to www.kevinbrennanfamily.com.

Cemetery Details

Mount Calvary Cemetery

801 SW Westchester Rd
Topeka, KS 66606

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **15**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Christ the King Catholic Church
5973 SW 25th St
Topeka, KS 66614-1973
(785) 273-0710

Rosary

SEP **15**. 7:00 PM (CT)

Christ the King Catholic Church
5973 SW 25th St
Topeka, KS 66614-1973
(785) 273-0710

Mass of Christian Burial

SEP **16**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Christ the King Catholic Church
5973 SW 25th St
Topeka, KS 66614-1973
(785) 273-0710

Tribute Wall



“ Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Elizabeth Bessette



Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home - September 14, 2023 at 05:59 PM

SA

“ I met Liz when I went thru breast cancer in 2005. She was always such a blessing and we shared a few things as she was raised in NCK and I had moved here from Concordia. She was always happy and kind and she will be missed by those who have known and worked with her at St Francis.
My deepest sympathy to Liz's family. God Bless
Sue Atherton

Suzy Atherton - October 02, 2023 at 06:54 PM

DA

“ Our most deepest sympathies, prayers and condolences to all the Kantack families may she rest in peace and continue her works with her lord.
David and Linda Alexander

David Alexander - September 16, 2023 at 10:56 AM

PA

“ I met Liz when we worked together on the Race Against Breast Cancer 5K event. She was always so positive and I loved her laugh. I was deeply saddened to learn of her passing.
Pam Alexander

pam alexander - September 15, 2023 at 11:54 PM

JL

“ Jerry, You and Liz have been pillars of the Church. Just 2 weeks ago, Liz helped distribute Communion. Now she is sharing communion in Heaven. This is a great loss and sadness. You and family are in our prayers. God bless during this time of mourning.
Jerry & Anna Marie Lammers

Jerry & Anna Maroe Lammers - September 15, 2023 at 08:36 PM

TC

“ Liz was with us at hospice when my mom Laura Charest passed away She Was the Best

Thomas.A Charest - September 15, 2023 at 04:37 PM

GP

“ Greg Pechin purchased the Sweet Tenderness for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.



Greg Pechin - September 15, 2023 at 02:06 PM

GP

“ Greg Pechin planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elizabeth Bessette.

Greg Pechin - September 15, 2023 at 02:06 PM

KB

“ Prayers for Liz and family.

Kathy Charest Barrett

Kathy Barrett - September 15, 2023 at 12:01 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Elizabeth Bessette.

September 15, 2023 at 11:30 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.



September 15, 2023 at 11:30 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.



September 15, 2023 at 06:19 AM

CD

“ Thank you, Angela, for sending the news of Liz’s death. I have been in tears all day thinking about the loss of such a beautiful person, & counted her as one of my dearest friends. We met at St. Francis Hospital as nurses in the late 60’s as she was pregnant with Jeff, & in charge of the little 4 bed ICU off the floor I was assigned while my husband was in the Air Force in Topeka. We were from NC & truly tickled to met Liz & Jerry & share Thanksgiving Dinner with them at their home. Liz had the most marvelous laugh, always putting folks at ease. I was learning the ropes of our floor, where things were kept & how to handle some interesting Doctors. Liz & I became friends immediately & helped each other out daily. I arranged a Surprise Baby Shower for her with the Floor’s Nursing Staff, in our tiny apartment. Liz tried to beg off because she was so very pregnant & tired. Our guests were waiting & I had to do some fast talking to get her to come that Sunday. She did & we had a grand party. Whenever we’d talk after leaving KS, we’d pick up right where we left off. I treasured her friendship deeply & will miss her greatly. Such a great loss to her family, friends & those folks that had the great fortune to have her acquaintance. The world has lost one of it’s shining stars & I grieve the loss. Tonight at our Bible Study session, I asked for prayers for Liz & her family. God bless all of you. Heaven is ringing with Liz’s delightful laughter now. We have to be grateful that we had her in our lives & now in our hearts.
Carmen Dixon

Carmen Dixon - September 15, 2023 at 01:17 AM

AN

What a beautiful story! I know she cherished your friendship and spoke of you often. So glad we got to visit you when I went to school in DC. We are definitely blessed to have had her in our lives.

Angela - October 12, 2023 at 09:27 PM

WD

“ With love, Craig and Paula Donofrio planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elizabeth Bessette.

With love, Craig and Paula Donofrio - September 14, 2023 at 11:58 PM

WD

“ With love, Craig and Paula Donofrio purchased the Pretty Please for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.



With love, Craig and Paula Donofrio - September 14, 2023 at 11:58 PM

SR

“ Liz was my first Director at St Francis in my first job out of nursing school. Kind, compassionate, levelheaded, thoughtful and always putting the patient first, that was Liz. I couldn't have asked for a better role model for my nursing career. Susan Runyan

Susan Runyan - September 14, 2023 at 11:10 PM

LC

“ Jerry and family,
I am so sorry to hear of Liz's passing. I didn't know her very well, but met her when I worked with Jerry at PSS (Payless).
May all your wonderful memories help ease your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you. God Bless.

Lesa Cyr

Lesa Cyr - September 14, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.*



September 14, 2023 at 10:51 PM



“ *Always loved working with Liz at St Francis and enjoyed seeing her at church. Will miss you Liz*

Jane Steffes - September 14, 2023 at 09:57 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.*



September 14, 2023 at 03:06 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.*



September 14, 2023 at 02:17 PM

CW

“ Will greatly miss her smile, friendliness, and the beautiful person she was. Met Liz when I worked at St. Francis Hospital in the 70's and we both went to Christ the King church....sorry for your loss.
Connie Willett

Connie Willett - September 14, 2023 at 10:22 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.



September 14, 2023 at 10:08 AM

DI

“ I worked with Liz in the Cancer Center. She was the first one to put the idea of going back to school and getting my Master's in Nursing in my head. As a mother of five sons, she would often share stories with me about Angela and her boys. She was proud of my accomplishments as a woman, mother, nurse, and a daughter of our Heavenly Father- and she would often tell me so. I also helped take care of Gayle several years ago. She was a role model and genuine friend to so many of us that were her St Francis family. She will be so missed and her family is in my prayers. 💜

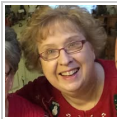
Dia - September 14, 2023 at 09:52 AM

NS

“ Oh Liz, Linda, sometimes I got so confused!! I first knew Liz at St. Francis when I was a nursing student working for survival. She was our House supervisor and I loved it every single time she came around to “check on us”. Never intimidating, never grumpy or grouchy. I wanted to grow up and be just like her!!! THEN.... Oh my gosh!! She set up my brother with her little sister and “boom”... she became extended family. I had so much confusion transitioning from Liz to Linda 🤔🤔

I will forever be thankful for the example she set in the very beginning of my career as a nurse, and how she never wavered from that. I’m forever thankful that she introduced my family to hers!! I’m forever thankful how she helped us through the difficulties of aging/sick parents. I will always remember her tender sweet spirit, her gigantic smile and sweet laugh. Never forgotten, always in our hearts. Can’t wait to see her again when we all get to Heaven!! (Maybe she will have seen a little bit of her influence in my nursing career). Rest now sweet lady, it’s your time to rest. Much love. ❤️
Nadine Lancaster Schulz

Nadine Schulz - September 14, 2023 at 09:32 AM



You yourself are an amazing nurse as well, Nadine.
So happy our families met.
Love you guys 💕
Zita

Zita Lancaster - September 15, 2023 at 08:59 AM

TS

“ I am so sorry to hear of Liz passing. She was beautiful inside and out! Loved working with her at St Francis.
My condolences to the family.

Terry Sigmund - September 14, 2023 at 08:06 AM

LE

“ To the family of Liz,
Our thoughts and prayers are with the whole family. Angela and my daughter, Lisa ran cross country together and I have many memories of those times. She was a wonderful lady.
Keith & Lorraine Eggen

Lorraine Eggen - September 13, 2023 at 11:11 PM

GS

“ My prayers go out to you, Jerry and children Liz was a caring, gentile, fantastic person.

Gordon Schmid - September 13, 2023 at 10:56 PM

MB

“ To Liz’s wonderful family, I am so sorry to hear of your loss. She will be greatly missed by everyone who knew her. Praying for you all.
Kirby and Marla Barker

Marla Barker - September 13, 2023 at 10:06 PM

TS

“ Always always always had the biggest smile and very positive. I worked with her at St Francis for many years if she ever had a bad day you wouldn’t know it. Her love for her faith , co-workers, patients was evident. Heaven has gained the best angel. I will see you again and we can walk the streets of gold for ever in heaven.

Terry Stauffer - September 13, 2023 at 09:05 PM

VJ

“ What a beautiful obituary for a beautiful human being. I had the pleasure of working with Liz for 9 of her last 10 years of her career in the Cancer Center. She was a remarkable person and I feel so grateful to have had the privilege of knowing her and caring for our beloved oncology patients and families with her. She taught me so much and it has helped shape my career. I was so, so sad to hear of her passing this morning. I've spent the day reminiscing with old coworkers and remembering her fondly. I know how faithful she was and that I will see her again someday. My deepest condolences to Jerry and Angela and Jeffrey and her beloved grandsons! Boy was she proud of them! Her office was always covered in their pictures. You are all in my prayers. What an angel Heaven gained today. -Val Jackson

Valerie Jackson - September 13, 2023 at 08:54 PM

JN

“ Jerry and family, so sorry for your loss. You are in my prayers.

Jeanette Nelson - September 13, 2023 at 08:46 PM

AN

“ Anita,Cindy,Danny&Julie,Tina,BrendaRandy planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Elizabeth Bessette.

Anita,Cindy,Danny&Julie,Tina,BrendaRandy - September 13, 2023 at 06:15 PM

AN

“ Anita, Cindy, Danny & Julie, Tina, Brenda & Randy purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.



Anita, Cindy, Danny & Julie, Tina, Brenda & Randy - September 13, 2023 at 06:15 PM

CS

“ What a beautiful obituary. What an amazing legacy to leave behind. It's been a sad day for me, but as I read this obituary and realize what amazing things she did and how great of a catholic she was, and see how many lives she touched, I can't help but smile and feel good, knowing that she is with Jesus. Jerry, Angela, and Jeff, my deepest condolences. You knew, first hand, how amazing she was. But also, I hope you find great comfort in knowing that so many of us others, family and friends, also found Aunt Linda to be such an amazing woman. It's a sad day, no doubt. But at the end of the day, we know she is up there with Frank, Odella, and Gayle. And if we play our cards right 😊, we will see her again some day.

Chris Springer - September 13, 2023 at 06:03 PM

RS

“ Jerry, Angela, and Jeff,
We are sorry to hear of Liz's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.
Rick and Kathy Strecker

Rick Strecker - September 13, 2023 at 05:09 PM

KC

“ Liz was one of the finest people I know. She was one of the best nurses I ever worked with during my nursing career. She was gentle, compassionate, unhurried and lived to help. She will be missed. Such a life well lived. Many of us are better because we knew her.

Kay Coward - September 13, 2023 at 04:44 PM

MM

“ Liz was a wonderful mother-in-law to our son Michael and a great friend to us. We enjoyed many holidays together when Michael and Angela lived in New York, and celebrated many First Communions, Confirmations, and graduations with her and Jerry. She was a wonderful person, kind, giving and caring. We are saddened by her passing and will not forget her. She has certainly gone home to God. Rest in peace, Liz. Mary and Roger Muller

Mary Muller - September 13, 2023 at 04:39 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Elizabeth Bessette.



September 13, 2023 at 04:36 PM

JB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



JEFF BESSETTE - September 13, 2023 at 03:57 PM

MP

Wonderful photo. I'm thinking of you, Jerry, and your family. I'm so sorry for your loss. Marjorie Pfister

Marjorie Pfister - September 14, 2023 at 11:46 PM

EN

“ *Jerry, praying for you and your children. May she forever share the love and warmth of the our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Eric Nichol - September 13, 2023 at 03:22 PM