



Nell Ritchey

May 23, 1948 - November 25, 2025

Nell Marie James Ritchey, 77, Topeka, Kansas, was born in Holton, Kansas, on May 23, 1948, passed away on November 25, 2025, surrounded by family. She was the daughter of George Lawrence James (1907-1982) and Mildred May Burks James (1908-1954). She was named Nell Marie in honor of her aunt, Nellie Maier, who died in 1948. Nell grew up in Mayetta, Kansas, and graduated from Mayetta Rural High School in 1966.

To a quite exceptional extent, Nell's life was devoted to the service of the Lord and to the service of those less fortunate, particularly the homeless and those whose lives had been shattered by alcoholism or addiction. She worked with the Topeka Rescue Mission and with similar missions in Texas and California, devoting almost 50 years of her life to them. In that role she initiated and directed many different programs and services. Of more importance, she was able to help many, many people whose paths had drifted off-course get back to more rewarding, productive and comfortable lives. Some of the programs and services she built will carry forward into the future, and large numbers of those she guided and helped now labor to pass on to others the blessings that she gave to them. Until the last days of her life she continued to find ways to serve that community and the Montara Village Community on the south edge of Topeka, where she helped to launch a food pantry and the Montara Home Church Ministry also known as the Woods at Montara.

Nell married Bill Ritchey on September 17, 1988, and had 37 wonderful years with him. She is survived by her husband; sons, Michael Covert (Melissa) of Shreveport, Louisiana, David Covert (Shawna) of Lafayette, Oregon, and Jared Ritchey (Jessica) of Topeka; ten grandchildren that range in age from seven months old to 36 years old; five great-grandchildren; sister, Georgine Ent of North Radley, Kansas; and brother, Bill James of Lawrence. She was preceded in death by her parents, three sisters, and a brother.

In the last decade she has devoted many hundreds of hours to the care and education of her grandchildren. Nell combined remarkable energy with a tremendous strength of character.

Memorial service will be 1 p.m. Saturday, December 13, 2025, at Wanamaker Woods Church of The Nazarene, 3501 SW Wanamaker Road, Topeka KS 66614.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Be Filled of South Topeka, and sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

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