



Phyllis S. Bales

July 26, 1926 - March 22, 2025

Phyllis Ann (Steinkamp) Bales, 98, died, Saturday, March 22, at her home. She joins her son, siblings and parents.

She was born Phyllis Ann Steinkamp on July 26, 1926, in Quincy, Ill., to Dorothy (Feld) and Clarence Steinkamp. At an early age, her family left Quincy for Aurora, where she lived for much of her life. She graduated from East Aurora High School in 1944 and from the University of Illinois – where she was a champion beer chugger, worked on the school newspaper with Hugh Hefner and was a buddy of television personality Gene Shalit – in 1948. Many Illini friends and sorority sisters remained lifelong friends.

She was a schoolteacher and homemaker, and later a frequent substitute teacher in the West Aurora School District, where all her children attended school. Despite having nine children she often made time to sit on the floor and play card games, from Casino, to Hearts to double, triple or even quintuple Solitaire. She was a Cub Scout den mother and volunteered for other activities in her children's lives.

Until her death she remained the Bales family queen of English grammar, with her children regularly calling and grandchildren emailing her to ask thorny questions about modifiers and “who vs. whom.” She regularly bemoaned the death of the practice of diagramming sentences.

At Holy Angels Church, she was a member of the St. Anne's Society, a Minister of Care, Eucharistic Minister and Hessed House volunteer. Besides subbing in West Aurora, she also taught at St. Nicholas School in Aurora and at Mooseheart. She also was involved with the Aurora Woman's Club, American Association of University Women and the Conimur Reading Circle. She was a member of the American Association of University Women and a volunteer with the Dominican Literary Center, teaching women to read, write and speak English. She participated in many book clubs and was a fierce competitor at the bridge table.

Phyllis also had an unquenchable thirst for travel, embarking on cruises, tours and trips throughout the United States – especially New Mexico, where at one point four children had moved – and Europe. “I have to travel now while I can still walk on those cobblestone streets,” was an oft-stated thought.” Though her pace sadly slowed in her later years, she relished all the trips taken and memories made.

She is survived by eight of her nine children, twins James (Jack) E. Bales III of Fredericksburg, Va., and Richard (Dick) (Joanne) of Aurora; Elizabeth (Beth) (Steve) Olson of Geneva; Sister Katherine Bales of Sacred Heart Convent in Springfield, Ill.; Margaret (Peggy) (Jon) Gilbertson of Aurora; twins Jane, of Rio Rancho, N.M., and David, of Cody, Wyo.; and Robert, also of Rio Rancho. She also is survived by grandchildren Patrick and Laura Bales, of Richmond, Va., and Boulder, Colo., respectively; Michael (Jade) Bales of Aurora and Thomas (Elizabeth) Bales, of Sugar Grove; and Emma Olson of Chicago, Torie (Tom) Burns of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Anne Olson of Chicago and a great-granddaughter, Josephine (Josie) Bales, of Sugar Grove.

She was preceded in death by her son, William (Bill) (Apiluk) of Rio Rancho, on Feb. 27, 2025; her parents, in 1971; and her siblings and their spouses;

Robert (Cathy) Steinkamp, John (Jack) (Helen) Steinkamp, and Margery (Don) Nurnberg.

Visitation will be held Wednesday, March 26, 2025, from 4 to 7 p.m. at THE DALEIDEN MORTUARY, 220 North Lake St., Aurora, IL 60506, 630-631-5500.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. from THE DALEIDEN MORTUARY; to Holy Angels Catholic Church at 10 a.m. with interment at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Aurora, Illinois.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Dominican Literacy Center, 260 Vermont Ave., Aurora, Ill., 60505

Please visit our interactive website at www.daleidenmortuary.com to leave condolences for Phyllis' family or sign the guest book.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Olivet Cemetery

278 Ashland Avenue
Aurora, IL 60505

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 26. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Daleiden Mortuary
220 N. Lake Street
Aurora, IL 60506
(630) 631-5500
daleidenmortuary@gmail.com
<https://www.daleidenmortuary.com>

Morning Prayers

MAR 27. 9:30 AM (CT)

Daleiden Mortuary
220 N. Lake Street
Aurora, IL 60506
(630) 631-5500
daleidenmortuary@gmail.com
<https://www.daleidenmortuary.com>

Funeral Mass

MAR 27. 10:00 AM (CT)

Holy Angels Church
120 South Lancaster Avenue
Aurora, IL 60506

Interment

MAR 27. 11:00 AM (CT)

Mt. Olivet Cemetery
278 Ashland Avenue
Aurora, IL 60505

Tribute Wall

TA

“ We were neighbors of the Bales on N. Evanslawn in the 50's. Phyllis was a great neighbor and friend of my parents for many, many years. My condolences to all the Bales.
Terri Hepp Alfredson

Theresa Alfredson - March 29, 2025 at 06:16 PM



I remember your parents very well

Robert Bales - October 09, 2025 at 11:03 PM



“ Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Phyllis S. Bales.



March 26, 2025 at 10:44 AM



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

March 26, 2025 at 10:44 AM

IM

“ Iwona M. lit a candle in memory of Phyllis S. Bales



Iwona M. - March 26, 2025 at 08:24 AM

MR

“ I knew Phyllis from way back when Jane, David, and Robert were at Todd School. I later had the pleasure of joining her group to attend some theater productions at Drury Lane. She was always an inspiration to me with her energy, enthusiasm, and variety of interests. My condolences to all of you.

Marilyn Rockstroh - March 25, 2025 at 01:37 PM

JU

“ To Phyllis' Family and Friends, may care and love of those around you provide comfort and peace to get you through the days ahead. My most sincere condolences.

I am confident that Phyllis is enjoying storytelling with Mooseheart "Red Ramblers" students, Friends and Family Members that have preceded her.

John Upton, "UPS", Mooseheart Class of '70

John Upton - March 25, 2025 at 09:45 AM

CI

“ I did not know Mrs. Bales but I too loved diagraming sentences! And I'm sure there should be a comma somewhere in that sentence. :)

Cindy - March 25, 2025 at 09:25 AM



f my niece were to see this, she would let you know, she has corrected my grammar before, even going as far as saying Nani would be appalled!

Robert Bales - October 09, 2025 at 11:05 PM

MC

“ *Phyllis was a delightful lady who accomplished so much in her life. It was always nice to visit with her and enjoy her sparkling smiles. Phyllis also raised some remarkable children, and our thoughts and prayers are with them now. Mike and Peggy Campbell*

Mike and Peggy Campbell - March 24, 2025 at 05:28 PM

MS

*My family Will miss her n She's moved to was a fun neighbor n Memories of her as a Sub teacher @ West Aurora HS!! our family n friends Will all miss her!!! L, n ☐ Hugs from The Howland family!! ☐❤️
🔥🙏🙏*

Mary Catherine Settles - March 25, 2025 at 10:24 AM

MP

“ *Mike and Peggy purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Phyllis S. Bales.*



Mike and Peggy - March 24, 2025 at 04:46 PM