

Nicki Gayle Markut, age 45, died peacefully on August 11th, 2019 in Lincoln, Nebraska, after a courageous battle with cancer. Nicki was born on January 11th, 1974 in Hamburg, Iowa to Ray and Gwen (Michel) Markut. From the very beginning, Nicki fell in love with the lake spending many weekends at the family's cabin, boating, fishing and playing in the sand. Growing up with two brothers Nicki naturally became a competitor at a young age. Traveling to compete in many BMX races, and in later years enjoying many special trips snow skiing down mountains with her family. Speaking of her fiercely competitive nature, she found a great passion for sports that included softball, basketball, volleyball and her personal favorite being tennis. She qualified for state tennis three years during High School and went on to play in college and in several leagues throughout her adulthood. Did I mention her first car? She loved that red Mazda Miata convertible. If only that car could tell stories, but we won't get into that.

Nicki graduated from Shenandoah High School in 1992. She attended Doane College majoring in elementary education and special education graduating in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. While at Doane she was a member of the Gamma Phi Lota sorority. Nicki continued her education receiving her master's in special education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1999. Nicki was a special education teacher at Waverly Middle School in Waverly, Nebraska for 23 years. As a teacher, Nicki was constant advocate for her students and built strong relationships with parents and co-workers. In addition to serving on the board of the Nebraska Educational Technology Association, Nicki was a presenter and sponsored winning student contest entries. She encouraged students to present in the Student Technology Showcase at the Nebraska Association of school boards. For many years, Nicki recruited students to assist with basketball and bowling at Special Olympic competitions.

Nicki Markut was one of a kind. She loved her family fiercely and would do just about anything she could for anyone she met. In 45 short years, she managed to influence more people that most do in their lifetimes. She was a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a partner, a friend, a teacher, a mentor, a colleague and a confidant, just to name a few. She played so many roles in her life...and in the words of one of her favorite musicians Bon Jovi "she rocked them all."

Nicki is survived by her proud parents; her boyfriend, Brian Thompson of Waverly, NE; her siblings, Jody Markut and wife Berlinda of Lincoln, Nebraska, and their children Hayden, Evan, Brianna and Bella and Cory Markut and wife Whitney of Malvern, Iowa and their children Xander and Liam. Preceded in death by her grandmother Dorothy Cleaveland and grandparents Harry and Hazel Michel.

There will be a private family graveside service at Rose Hill Cemetery in Shenandoah, Iowa. Join us for a Celebration of her Life Gathering on Saturday, August 24, 2019 from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. with a eulogy at 6:00 p.m. at the Waverly Community Foundation Building, 11120 N. 141st St. in Waverly, Nebraska 68462. Open to all family and friends, cookies and refreshment will be served.

Memorials in Nicki's honor can be sent to Special Olympics of Nebraska at www.sone.org/get-involved/funds/waystogive.html or NSEA Children's Fund at <http://nsea.org/childrensfund>.