



Joan Ellen Loring

February 5, 1945 - October 30, 2025

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Joan Ellen Loring, a lifelong resident of Hamburg, New York, passed away peacefully in her home on October 30, 2025.

Born to Dr. Jonas H. Loring and Betty M. Loring, Joan was the oldest of their two daughters. She is survived by her sister, Sue Gurley, her brother-in-law Peter Gurley, and her cherished nieces, Tessa McKinley and Megan Eckroth. She is also lovingly remembered by her three great-nieces and great-nephew, who will remember her quirky weather-ready outfits, her unique gift-giving and her penchant for deep political discussions.

Joan was a proud graduate of Syracuse University, where she earned her B.A. in Theology. She went on to receive her Juris Doctor degree from SUNY Buffalo, graduating cum laude from Buffalo Law School.

Joan's life was defined by a deep commitment to public service and community. From 1974 to 1977 she served as a VISTA Volunteer in Oklahoma where she embodied her lifelong dedication to improving the lives of others. Upon returning home to Western New York, she began a long and distinguished career in public service. She served as Assistant Erie County Attorney and later as Commissioner of the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning for more than a decade. In that role, she became the first woman and the youngest department head in Erie County Government since the approval of the County Charter in

1959—a milestone she achieved with humility, leadership, and integrity. Joan was also a proud member of the Bar Association of Erie County. Upon retiring she actively volunteered to aid those in need in her community.

Outside of her professional accomplishments Joan was known for her love of the outdoors. Whether hiking local trails or exploring new landscapes, she found joy and peace in nature and shared that love freely with friends and family.

Joan will be deeply missed by all who knew her - for her intellect, her generosity, and her unwavering commitment to serve the community she so deeply loved.

Donations in Joan's memory may be made to a local conservation or environmental organization of one's choice.

Cemetery Details

St. Francis Natural Burial Grounds, Queen of Heaven Cemetery

6843 Tonawanda Creek Road
Lockport, NY 14094

Tribute Wall

MR

“ Dear Joan, I have so many fond memories of hiking with you all over Erie County. For 10 years you organized our group, choosing a place and watching the weather forecast. You taught me to go off the beaten path and to look and identify plant species. To notice the ecosystem of each place.
You seem to come alive in the woods!

Maryann Reichard - November 06, 2025 at 07:04 AM

PM

“ Joan was my dearest and closest friend. We hiked all over New York in the Adirondacks to the Finger lakes even California at Yosemite. I worked with her and that's how our friendship started. We had so many adventures. So many great memories. I can't tell you how many times we got lost but clearly found our way out. She taught me so much. She was one of a kind.

Peggy McDowell - November 05, 2025 at 01:22 PM

CK

“ Sue & Family - We lived three houses up from Joan and have known her since 1983. We spent many days walking, going out to lunch, going to movies, and discussing politics. Also we visited Joan and your mom when she was in Florida one winter. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance when you are in town. Sending hugs and sympathy for your loss. Jim & Cheryl Koelmel 716-984-7717.

Cheryl Koelmel - November 05, 2025 at 11:47 AM

EP

“Joan, Joan, Joan,
We shared several years together in the Ed Rutkowski Administration; you as Commissioner of Environment and Planning and me as County Attorney.
You were solid as a rock. Other department heads were of various abilities, depending on time and place. You were always thinking, moving things forward; full of ideas and support for the administration.
It was a pleasure knowing you and working with you. Your memory will be a blessing to me.
With deep gratitude,
Eugene F. Pigott

Eugene Pigott - November 05, 2025 at 11:21 AM



“Joan and my family have been friends since June of 1979 when we moved across the street . We shared thousands of walks and talks, hours of working together on various projects, family celebrations, laughs, tears and caring. Joan always hired our two boys and our grandson to do chores around her house. She always was kind, generous, and loving. Joan will always be in my heart and with me forever. God Bless Joan and thank you. Love Sandy Kucharski

Sandy Kucharski - November 04, 2025 at 07:40 AM

SS

Joan was my neighbor. I first met her when I was 10-years-old while going door to door selling candy bars with my friend. She bought two of them then gave them back to us. That was just the kind of person she was, generous and kind. It was a privilege to have known her for the last four decades. She always had a kind word of encouragement that meant so much. My sympathy for your loss. Sincerely, Sara Siesto

Sara Siesto - November 05, 2025 at 04:40 PM