



Betty Jean Klaaren

September 9, 2015 - September 9, 2015

Betty Jean Klaaren was born, October 18, 1932, in Oskaloosa, Iowa to Ralph and Jennie (Vander Meyden) Van Zetten. She was a 1950 graduate of Oskaloosa High School where she was named the salutatorian of her class. Betty married the love-of-her-life, Ernest John Klaaren, September 22, 1950, at Central Reformed Church in Oskaloosa. Ernie entered the Army in February 1951; while he was in his initial training in Indiana, Betty moved there with him. Betty came back to Oskaloosa to live with her parents when Ernie was sent to Germany. After Ernie's return from the military, Betty and Ernie moved to a farm near Fremont and eventually purchased the farm and built a new home. Those were busy days for Betty with three children to care for in addition to helping her husband on the farm. In 1961, Betty took a job with McCurdy Seeds in Fremont as a secretary/bookkeeper. Over the next several years she worked in various other offices including an insurance office and a physician's office.

Betty was a life-long member of Central Reformed Church and over the years served in numerous capacities including: organist and pianist, and Bible school teacher. As a young mother, she was a member of Phoebe Sisters. Later she was a member of Ladies Aide and she helped in the kitchen for countless weddings and funerals. Betty volunteered extensively in the Fremont and Oskaloosa communities, one of her greatest passions was for the Mahaska County Conservation Commission which she served over 30

years. Betty loved music and also enjoyed expressing her creativity in painting, needlepoint, embroidery, and cross-stitch. Betty always had a large garden and spent many hours canning and freezing. While living near Fremont, she and Ernie made many dear friends and even after moving into Oskaloosa in 1991, they continued meeting with their monthly card club.

Betty's family includes her husband of 64 years, Ernie of Oskaloosa; a son and daughter-in-law, Larry and Mary Klaaren of New Lenox, IL; two daughters and sons-in-law: Susan and Bruce Thornal of Westminster, CO and Beth and Steve Terpstra of Oskaloosa; four grandchildren and their spouses: Heather & Scott Gilroy of Cedar Falls, IA, Wes & Holly Terpstra of Oskaloosa; Zachary Klaaren and Zoe Klaaren, both of New Lenox, IL; two step-granddaughters and their spouses: Jenn and Shane Bauman and Krista and Kevin Lancaster, all of Castle Rock, CO; four great-grandchildren and six step-great-grandchildren; two brothers and their wives: Lawrence & Claudia Van Zetten of Custer, SD and Jim & Diane Van Zetten of Grand Rapids, MI; three sisters-in-law and their husbands: Evelyn (Byron) Englehoven of Oskaloosa, Mildred (Gilbert) Visser of West Lafayette, IN and Marilyn Jones of Greenville, TX.

In addition to her parents, Betty was preceded in death by an infant son, Ernest Gene; an infant great-grandson, Noah; a sister and brother-in-law, Helen and Clarence Van Heukelom and a sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Martha and Harold Nieuwsma.

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Tribute Wall



“ *Betty Jean Klaaren*

October 05, 2023 at 11:57 PM



“ *Ernie, Larry, Susan and Beth - Please accept my deepest sympathies for your loss. Betty was a dear friend and neighbor.....she will be missed.*

Marilyn Van Roekel - September 10, 2015 at 12:00 AM