

Verena Coenen, 90

Feb. 14, 1926 - Oct. 22, 2016

HARLAN — Verena Ann Coenen, daughter of John and Clara (Strauel) Wilwerding was born February 14, 1926 in Earling. She was baptized, confirmed, and graduated high school at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Earling.

Shortly after graduating high school, Verena worked as a housekeeper for a local lawyer and his family. She met the love of her life, Kenny, at the Shelby County Fair. They married in 1945 and moved to a farm between Harlan and Defiance. In 1955, they moved to a farm near Woodbine, where they would raise their family. In the mid 60's

they purchased the farm. Verena loved her life on the farm, raising her children and helping her husband with livestock, pets and the grain operation. Verena was happiest when she was outdoors, helping Kenny, often driving the tractor and wagon, or riding along in the tractor or combine. She planted a large garden and spent countless hours outdoors, singing and swinging with her children and, later, grandchildren.

Verena loved reciting poetry and authored many original poems. She taught religious education for many years at Sacred Heart Parish in Woodbine. Verena was an accomplished card player, and took every opportunity to play with family and friends. She loved hearing and telling a good joke, and it was okay if it was just a little bit dirty. Ken and Verena were fortunate to travel and tour several countries and landmarks in the US and abroad. They remained active with their Woodbine card club and friends after they retired and moved to Harlan in 1987.

Verena learned to china paint after moving to Harlan, she made china dolls and doll clothes for each of their grandchildren. She was active in St. Michael's Altar Society and volunteered at St. Michael's elementary school. She was proud to be a frequent blood donor and member of the Hospital Auxiliary. Verena enjoyed long walks in the parks and on the streets of Harlan, and loved to entertain friends and family in her home. Verena was an excellent cook: her signature dish was a hearty roast beef with potatoes and gravy. Although her memory began to fade, she never forgot her faith in God, her love for her husband and family, or her love for a good game of cards. Verena died on October 22, 2016 at the Elm Crest Retirement Community in Harlan attaining the age of ninety years, eight months and eight days.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brothers Jerald Wilwerding; Joe Wilwerding; Rev. Albert Wilwerding; her sisters Marie Stessman and Lucille Blum. She is survived by her loving husband of 71 years, Kenneth, children Linda and her husband Tom Boswell of Los Alamitos, CA; Robert Coenen and his wife Teri of Cozad, NE; Richard Coenen and his wife Elaine of Omaha; Randy Coenen and his wife Teresa of Woodbine; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; sister Alice Stessman of Omaha; brother Ray Wilwerding and his wife Mary of Earling; nieces and nephews; other family members and friends.

A 12:00 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Rev. John Frost on Tuesday, October 25, 2016 at the St. Michael's Catholic Church in Harlan. Jeff Coenen, Russ Rauterkus, Dean Coenen, Rod Wietzki, Kevin Coenen, Ryan Coenen, Dave Stracke and Tyler Coenen served as casket bearers. Burial was held at the Woodbine Cemetery in Woodbine.



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