



## Bernice L. Smith

February 19, 1916 - October 30, 2015

Bernice L Smith

RACINE-Bernice L. (nee Biebel), Smith age 99, passed away peacefully at her home on Friday, October 30, 2015.

Bernice was born on February 19, 1916 in Bellevue, Wisconsin near the city of Green Bay, the oldest daughter of Edward and Josephine (Verdegam) Biebel. She attended Cathedral School and graduated from East High School in Green Bay. Bernice worked at Kraft Foods in Green Bay. She also worked at the grocery store of her uncle, John Biebel, which at one time stood prominently on the corner of East Mason and South Baird Streets in Green Bay.

On June 12, 1941, Bernice was united in marriage with Leslie C. Smith at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay. Together they enjoyed almost 69 years of marriage. Leslie and Bernice were members of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Racine for over 50 years. Leslie passed away on May 8, 2010.

Bernice was born on the homestead of her maternal grandfather, uniquely in the same farmhouse where her mother had been born 25 years earlier. As a youngster growing up in the rural serenity of farm life, Bernice greatly enjoyed the many trips and visits she made with her parents. She could recall journeys by horse and buggy to visit friends, and adventuresome trips with her parents by auto over the always dusty and often muddy dirt roads of early 20th century Wisconsin, visiting relatives as far away as Ladysmith, Manitowoc and Milwaukee. As Bernice said in recent times, "Though it was a very long time

ago, I still remember all of my aunts, uncles, cousins and their families. When everyone got together, they would sometimes reminisce about their families and the times long ago when they were growing up. From the time I was little I enjoyed listening to their stories; it was all just so fascinating! Those were the days long before television, and even radio wasn't all that common when I was young. My parents and I would often look through our albums and pictures and they would tell me about our relatives and ancestors and family friends in the old pictures and I would enjoy hearing the stories about them." Throughout all of her life and into her 90's, Bernice was blessed with an impressive memory. She recalled the old stories and began early on to document her family history, continuing throughout her lifetime. She enjoyed photography and at an early age she worked and saved to buy a camera. Bernice's photos helped to capture serene moments with her family and friends. At home she developed her own film, printed, enlarged and sometimes colorized her photos.

Bernice recalled conversations in detail with her paternal grandfather, a civil war veteran. Her vivid memories provided the historical information for the Allouez Cemetery presentation of If Tombstones Could Talk featuring her grandparents, Frank and Margaret Biebel (available on YouTube).

Bernice recalled, "My grandfather went to a Packers game when he was older and he was surprised at just how rough they played. I remember seeing the Packers players drive by our home. It was during the early 1920's and we lived on East Mason Street at that time. City Stadium was not too far away, but the Packers would sometimes drive to a different field to practice. I was little and they looked like pretty big men, and it seemed like they could hardly fit into the open top cars they were riding in. Sometimes my dad would take me to the field to watch them practice."

Bernice's strength and determination saw her through difficulties during her lifetime. Despite being gravely ill, she and her family survived the great influenza epidemic of 1918. At age ten, she was afflicted by an infection that left her unable to walk. Her doctor could help only by showing her pictures of

wheelchairs. "When I saw those pictures I was determined to work hard to walk again. Day by day, month after month, it took a very long time, but finally I could go outside and play with my cousins who lived on the farm next to ours." Bernice always had an extremely strong strength of will and determination which served her well throughout her long life.

Bernice's life was accented by a strong work ethic. There was rarely a time when she wasn't busy or working to make things better for her loved ones. Bernice's family was always at the center of her life, always the first to offer when help was needed.

Bernice and Leslie had a large yard, and grew and canned just about every kind of fruit and vegetable imaginable. She cherished her time with her two granddaughters, teaching them embroidery, to design and sew dolls and doll clothes, to pick fruits and berries, cook jelly, can pickles and just relax and enjoy watching and learning about the squirrels, birds and rabbits playing in the yard.

Besides her husband, Bernice was preceded in death by her parents; brother and sister-in-law, Loyal and Elaine Biebel; brother-in-law, Frank Holznecht and brothers-in-law and their wives, John and Helen Smith and Raymond E. and Alice Smith.

Bernice is survived by sons, Ronald (Diane) of Racine and Randall of Green Bay; daughter, Lois Caryn of Kenosha; granddaughters, Wendy (Ron) Goldschmidt of Waterford and Tracey (Tim) Lui of Racine; great-grandchildren, Samantha and Matthew Lahti and Melissa Lui; and sister Myra Holznecht of Saint Ana, California.

Visitation will be held on Saturday November 7, 2015 from 10:30 a.m. until service time at 11 a.m. at Allouez Catholic Cemetery Chapel in Green Bay. She will be laid to rest beside her husband following services.

The Smith family wishes to express sincere appreciation to Jeremy, Debbie, Isaac, Mary, Denetta, Jill, Ann, Lauren, Cara and Laurie of Wheaton

Franciscan Hospice, for their gentle, loving and compassionate care to Bernice.

Very special appreciation to Wendy Goldschmidt for her unending love, kindness and gentle care giving which helped to make it possible for her grandmother to stay in her home until the end of her lifetime.

# Cemetery Details

## Allouez Catholic Cemetery

Green Bay, WI

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 7. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Allouez Catholic Cemetery  
Green Bay, WI

## Funeral Service

NOV 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

Allouez Catholic Cemetery  
Green Bay, WI

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sturino Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Bernice L. Smith*



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**Sturino Funeral Home** - November 05, 2015 at 03:55 PM

AS

“ *Anne Smith-Rhodes lit a candle in memory of Bernice L. Smith*



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**Anne Smith-Rhodes** - November 07, 2015 at 08:29 AM

AS

*My Sincerest condolences to you all! She was Blessed with a good Long life & great memories for you all to remember her by :) God bless her soul*

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**Anne Smith-Rhodes** - November 07, 2015 at 08:36 AM



“ 57 files added to the album LifeTributes



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**Sturino Funeral Home** - November 05, 2015 at 02:48 PM