



## Dorothy W. Wood

March 2, 1920 - May 13, 2010

RACINE - Dorothy W. Wood, passed away on Thursday, May 13, 2010 at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare - All-Saints. Sadly the Wood family bid farewell to their matriarch - a woman who brought so much love, happiness and humor to the lives of all who knew and cherished her.

Dorothy was born in Kenosha on March 2, 1920. She grew up there attending local schools. On July 14, 1939 in the picturesque river town of Dubuque, Iowa, she was united in marriage to James Reid Wood of Ottawa, Kansas. They resided in Kenosha until 1943, then relocated to Racine.

As a pre-teen she loved to roller-skate and rough-house with her older sister, Ethyl. As a teen she cared for her younger siblings, went to the library and occasionally the movies. As a young woman, she dated, went to dances and listened to country music on the radio. At every age she was an avid reader.

In her early married years, she struggled to care for her young family in a house without running water or indoor plumbing. Her truck garden provided food for the table in the same way that her roses provided joy for their souls. Especially lean times forced her to work part-time jobs; including one with the historic Horlick Malted Milk Company. She was a fun person and laughed easily. She loved to play along with her children and joined in when they were silly. She made a point of trying to recall her childhood in detail so that she

could be sure that she was filling in the 'holes' that had been left in hers. She made an effort to remember what it had been like being a child and what it felt like from their point of view. She was fair and reasonable with discipline and drummed the basics of life into their little heads and hearts.

In her middle years, she took an interest in volunteering and joined Goodwill's VSO where she helped organize events for the disabled and mentally challenged. She also volunteered at local hospitals; a natural fit for her cheery ways. We'll never know the names of the patients she visited but we do know that wherever she went, she brought sunshine and added value to lives that maybe had little. She became interested in politics and sports. A national election and Brett Farve always got her attention. It was during these calmer years that she found time to read again. Her favorite activity, however, was spending time with her family; especially the 'little ones' who gave her such great joy.

It was her childhood years, however, that were most pivotal in creating the Dorothy we remember. Her parents did not embrace religious traditions, customs or holidays. They were good, honest people but somewhat unaffectionate parents. Dorothy and her siblings would not escape the negative impact of never having been hugged, kissed or told that they were loved. Sadly, her parents didn't believe in celebrating birthdays. The only reason Dorothy knew that birthdays were celebrated was from hearing about it from her classmates and seeing their gifts. It was these years that would leave the biggest emotional scar. She promised herself that when she became a parent, she would demand for her children what her childhood friends had had in theirs, the warmth of affection and the acknowledgement that they were individuals of worth. Their birthdays would be celebrated with cake, candles, gifts and laughter. Holidays would be long anticipated and celebrated with joy. She relied on her new husband to teach her the ropes. She admittedly struggled with learning to cook but eventually she became a very good one.

Her holiday meals were really delicious, especially her pumpkin pie and sweet potatoes; recipes which survive today as cherished family dishes.

Despite her background and the fact that she had so much of the practical to learn, she did not have to learn how to love...that came naturally and abundantly. As Dorothy moved thru life it was obvious that we were in the presence of a truly special individual that could only have come from the very lap of God! Dorothy, figuratively and physically, reached out to others in friendship, love and warmth. No one, absolutely no one was better at making you feel good when you walked in than sweet Dorothy. She would look up, her eyes would get wide, her arms would shoot out and she'd open her mouth and let out a squeal of joy! We were used to this amazing greeting and are so grateful that we can look forward to another when we see her again. On this side, however, it took others a bit of getting used to, but used to it they did get... and forever loved her for it. Dorothy will always be remembered for her overflowing sweetness, kindness and generosity.

She will be grieved as a mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, neighbor and friend. Her memory and the memories she created will live on in those who loved and survive her; her four children, James D. Wood of Garland, TX, Beverly (David) Groth of Burlington, WI, Wayne R. Wood of Denver, CO and Audrey Miller of Racine; eight grandchildren, Debra (James) Wendt, Rebecca (Michael) Zigler, James (Christine) Wood, Rachel Woolrage, Daniel (Jennifer ) Miller, Julie Miller, Tracy Wood and Scott (Amanda) Miller; nine great-grandchildren, Jennifer, Elisabeth, Marissa, Miranda, Veronica, Daniel, Katelyn, Ryan and Matthew and one great great grandchild expected in September; brother, Howard Wolkomir, special niece, Nancy Wolkomir and devoted friend, Lisa Marshall. She is further survived by many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Dorothy was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Jim on March 7, 2005; parents, Samuel & Jennie Wolkomir; brothers, Oscar, Louis, Harry, Max and Jake; sisters, Ethel (Frank) Vaitkus, Sarah (Chet) Safago, Ida (Floyd) Davis; infant grandson, Scott James Woolrage, son-in-law, Norman G. Miller.

Funeral services will be held at Sturino Funeral Home on Wednesday, May 19, 2010 at 1 p.m. with Rev. John Fleming officiating. Burial will be in West Lawn Memorial Park. There will be a visitation at the funeral home on Tuesday evening from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. and on Wednesday, before services from 12 noon until service time.