

Obituaries

Patrick H. Curry

Services for Patrick Howard Curry, 83, of Tuscola, IL were held at 2:00 p.m., Friday, April 9, 2021 at the First Baptist Church, 231 North Illinois Street, Atwood, IL with visitation two hours before the service at the church. Burial was in the Cartwright Cemetery, Tuscola, IL. Pastor Lanny Faulkner was the minister in charge. He was assisted by Pastor Woody White.



Mr. Curry died Tuesday, April 6, 2021, at his home. Pallbearers are Paul Wooley, Matthew Witson, Steve Wenege, Brian Reinhart, Gary Appleby, and John L. Curry. Honorary pallbearers are Leo Walker and Raul Carrillo. Mr. Curry was born June 24, 1937 in Decatur, Illinois, the son of Earl James and Reba Florence (Mock) Curry. He attended Atwood schools until he enrolled in Georgia Military Academy (Woodward Academy) in College Park, Georgia. He graduated in 1955 as a lieutenant and floor commander of the fifth grade boys. He attended Eastern Illinois University and earned an associate's degree in engineering. His 47-year career as an engineer/draftsman included 25 years at U.S.I. at Tuscola and 11 years at Mid-State Tank Company in Sullivan, Illinois, before he retired in 2003. He served nearly 30 years as a trustee for Garrett Township. He also was a member of First Baptist Church of Atwood, serving one term as a deacon. He also taught the men's Sunday school class.

He is preceded in death by his parents and one brother, John T. Curry.

He is survived by his wife of 36 years, Sue Eldridge Curry; one sister, Loretta (Curry) Vaughn; son, Eric H.J. (Paula) Curry of Marshall; three daughters, R. Dawn (Dan) Hanke of Tuscola, Vanessa E. Curry of Cookeville, Tennessee; and Gail D. (Terry) Kearns of Paducah, Kentucky; step-son, Tom K. (Jami) Gossett of Phoenix Arizona; step-daughter, Patricia (Ervin) Chafian of Lincoln, Illinois; five grandchildren; nine step-grandchildren; two great-granddaughters; and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to the First Baptist Church of Atwood.

Hilligoss Shrader Funeral Home is assisting the family with the arrangements. Online condolences may be shared via www.hilligossshraderfh.com

Alice J. Felkner

Alice J. Felkner, 93, of Newman died at 12:36 a.m. on Sunday, April 4, 2021 at Arbor Rose of Tolono.

Jean was born April 2, 1928 in Scotland, IL the daughter of Ora and Sarah Ella Miller. She was a wife and homemaker. She enjoyed camping, baking, embroidering, and visiting with her neighbors. She was an avid Cubs fan. She married Ben Felkner on October 13, 1946; he preceded her in death on June 9, 2002.

Surviving are her son, Tom (Karen) Felkner of Villa Grove; daughters, Carolyn (Rich) Casteel of Mahomet, Joyce (Lane) Blair of Newman, and Sue (Brian) Blair of Pesotum; brothers, Herb (Vernon) Miller of Broadlands, and Earl Miller of Puyallup, Washington; ten grandchildren, Amy (Mark) Manning, Annette (Shawn) Ray, Kim (Wayne) Nelson, Chad Gordon, Jason (Chrissy) Casteel, Connie (Blake) Mowery, Michael (Jenn) Blair, Amanda (Fred) Albers, Sarah McCormick, and Bradley Blair; and 12 great-grandchildren, Nicholas Manning, Haley Manning, Ben Nelson, Andrew Nelson, Jordan Casteel, Cassidy Casteel, Dylan Blair, Rylie Blair, Ella McCormick, Sarah McCormick, Abbi McCormick, and Maggie Jo Mowery.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, five brothers, and two sisters.

A graveside service was held at 11:00 a.m. on April 9, 2021 at the Tuscola Township Cemetery with Pastor Tim Ferrill officiating. Masks were required.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Arbor Rose of Tolono, Newman Regional Library, or an organization of the donor's choice.

Louise J. Schmidt

Louise Jane Schmidt, age 94, died on April 3, 2021 in Champaign, Illinois. She was born on December 31, 1926 to Frank and Hilda Gallagher of Pesotum.

She married Harold Schmidt on February 23, 1949. He preceded her in death in 1975.

She is survived by her ten children: Stephen (Eileen), Karen Smith, Dan (Susan), Connie Masters, Barb (Daryl) Vandeventer, Paul (Carol), Sara Rogers (Rick Rybarczyk), Mary Richmond (Mark Jackson), Theresa Newman, and Tom (Lucinda). She is also survived by numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren; two sisters: her twin sister Lois Moore and Mary Thinnis (passed away April 7, 2021); and many nieces and nephews.

She was also preceded in death by her parents, a sister and a brother.

Louise graduated from Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. She enjoyed spending time with her family, traveling, and playing cards.

Her funeral mass was celebrated at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, April 16 at St. Mary's Church, Pesotum. Visitation was one hour before services at the church. Memorial donations may be made to an organization of the donor's choice.

Mabel C. Williamson

Mabel C. Williamson, 92, of Newman passed away at 3:30 a.m. Thursday, April 8 at Newman Rehabilitation Center.

Mabel was born May 29, 1928 in Douglas County, IL, the daughter of Ancil and Shirley (Fogleman) Eastin. She married Isaac Williamson on December 6, 1947. They were married in Tuscola, IL. He preceded her in death along with two brothers, five sisters, and a grandson.

Survivors include one daughter, Linda (Tom) Adams of Newman; one son, Jeff (Julie) Williamson of Chrisman; five grandchildren, Craig (Mary) Adams of Warsaw, IN, Chrissy (Adam) Bennett of Tuscola, IL, Cory (Angie) Williamson of Ica, Peru, Shelby (Adam) Kuper of Paris, IL and Robby Williamson of Terre Haute, IN; and five great grandchildren, Sophia Adams, Austin and Chloe Bennett, and Aiden and Alivia Kuper.

Mabel was a devoted farmer's wife and loving mother and grandmother to her children and grandchildren. Her hobbies included making delicious meals, gardening, playing cards, and enjoying the company of her family and friends.

A funeral service was held at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, April 12, 2021 at the Joines Funeral Home (Newman) with Pastor Cory Williamson and Mr. Kevin Hoffman officiating. Burial followed at the Oakland Cemetery in Oakland, IL. A visitation was held two hours prior to the funeral service. Joines Funeral Home (Newman) is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Donations may be made to the organization of the donor's choice.

Andrew J. Shields Jr

Andrew Jackson "A.J." Shields Jr, 79, of Arcola, IL passed away at 4:37 a.m. on Saturday, April 10, 2021 at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center.

Funeral services were held at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at the Edwards Funeral Home, 221 East Main Street in Arcola, IL. Pastor Brent Budd officiated. Burial followed in the Arcola Cemetery. Visitation was held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 12, 2021 at the funeral home.

A.J. was born on April 29, 1941 in Arcola, IL. He was a son of Andrew Jackson "Cracker" and Coleta (Peeler) Shields Sr. He married Dolress Josephine "Jo" Brandon on September 25, 1964 in Arcola, IL. She passed away on February 24, 2018.

He is survived by three sons, Andrew Jackson III and his fiancé Tina Embry, Keith M. Shields and his wife Carrie and Matthew B. Shields all of Arcola, IL; three grandchildren, Kali Jo Shields, Dylan Shields and Brianna Shields, three great-grandchildren, Aubree Spears, Arrow Spears and Knova Shields and one brother, Roger Shields of and his wife Andrea of Champaign, IL.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Jo Shields, one son, Dustin Shields, one grandchild, Azaea Rain Shields, a twin brother who died as a child and a half-brother, Cody Richey.

A.J. was a Marine Veteran having served his country for four years, he was stationed in the Philippines.

A.J. owned and operated A & J Towing and Auto Repair in Arcola for over 40 years.

Back in the day A. J. enjoyed bowling at Embassy lanes in Arcola, IL and one of his favorite things to do was drinking coffee at the Hen House and visiting with old friends.

Minerva R. Bontreger

Minerva R. (Yutzy) Bontreger, 94, of rural Arcola, IL passed away at 1:41 p.m. on Saturday, April 10, 2021 at her residence.

Funeral services were held at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at the Otto Center in rural Arthur, IL. Bishop David J. Otto officiated. Burial was in the Otto Cemetery. Visitation was held any time after 2:00 p.m. on Monday, April 12, 2021 at the Otto Center and anytime after 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at the Otto Center. The Edwards Funeral is assisting with arrangements.

Minerva was born on January 31, 1927 in Douglas County, IL. She was a daughter of William S. and Rachel L. (Stutzman) Yutzy. She married Andrew F. Bontreger on August 31, 1944 in Douglas County, IL. They lived in Holy Matrimony for 64 years. He passed away on March 15, 2009.

Minerva is survived by eight children, Verna Irene Otto and her husband Lewis of Arthur, IL, Toby Bontreger of Arthur, IL, Rosie Carol Bontreger and her husband Howard of Goshen, IN, Lucy Ellen Chupp and her husband Olen of Arthur, IL, Mary Louise Whitley of Arcola, IL, Lorene Helmuth and her husband Darrell of Lovington, IL, Julie Ann Yoder and her husband Joseph of Arcola, IL and RoseAnna Faye Bontreger of Arthur, IL; twenty-three grandchildren, fifty-three great-grandchildren, thirty great-great-grandchildren; one sister Gertie Plank of Arthur, IL and one sister-in-law, Lucy Yutzy of Arcola, IL.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Andrew F. Bontreger, one son, Willis Bontreger, one daughter, Dorothy Marie Mast and her husband Lynn, three grandchildren, Tony Bontreger, Inez Bontrager and Nichole Whitley, one brother Chris Yutzy and a brother-in-law, Jonas Plank.

Minerva had a passion for quilting, she hand quilted over 500 quilts for other people, most recently finishing a quilt in February. She enjoyed being a homemaker, even at the age of 94 she did all her own housework. She recently took a job outside the home at Heartland Deli and Delights in Arthur, IL. Minerva washed dishes there 2 days a week and genuinely enjoyed it.

Minerva was a member of the Old Order Amish.

Doris E. Bretz

Doris "Dodie" E. Bretz, 86, of Villa Grove died at 10:17 a.m. on Monday, April 5, 2021 at the Carle Foundation Hospital.

Dodie was born on July 5, 1934 in Urbana, IL to Ernie and Opal (Burk) Combs. She married Paul Bretz on January 4, 1953 in Villa Grove.

She is survived by three children, Tom (Ruth) Bretz of Villa Grove, Joyce Bretz of Camargo, and Sue (David) Yerxa of Woodland Hills, CA; six grandchildren, Rachel (Andy) DeWitt of Villa Grove, Tim (Mandy) Bretz of Villa Grove, Jon Bretz of Villa Grove, Thomas "Ted" Yerxa of Woodland Hills, CA, Dani Yerxa of Woodland Hills, CA, and Juli Jobe of Camargo; and one great-grandchild, Zachariah DeWitt.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Dodie was a kindergarten teacher aid for several years in Villa Grove. She was elected and spent 12 years as the Camargo township supervisor, and also sold real estate for 20 years. While working those jobs, she was always a homemaker as well. Dodie loved her family and always kept in contact with her nieces and nephews. Her and her husband Paul were married for over 68 years.

A funeral service was held at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 11, 2021 at the Joines Funeral Home (Villa Grove) with Mr. Ted Shearer officiating. Burial followed at the Murdock Cemetery. The visitation was held from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 10, 2021 at the Joines Funeral Home (Villa Grove).

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



Leonard H. Rentz

Leonard Henry Rentz, 84 of Paxton, formerly of Tuscola, passed away at 8:23 a.m. Saturday, April 3, 2021, at his home.

Funeral services were held at 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 6, 2021, at Baier Family Funeral Services, 406 E Pells Street, Paxton with Rev. Debra Domeier officiating. Burial followed in Tuscola Twp. Cemetery, Tuscola.

Visitation was held Tuesday two hours before the funeral service beginning at 11:00 a.m. at the funeral home.

Leonard was born September 18, 1936 in rural Paola, Kansas the son of Reinhold and Estella (Koelsch) Rentz; the second of four children in the family.

He attended elementary school at First Lutheran School in Paola and graduated from Paola High School in 1954. He served in the U.S. Air Force Reserve from 1954-62. Leonard graduated from Murray State University in 1968, majoring in chemistry and math, with minors in Business Management and English. He later obtained a diploma as a Certified Nursing Assistant from Parkland College, Champaign.

Leonard married Carol Wilke in 1955 at Paola, Kansas. They became the parents of three children (Ronnie, Debra and Carl). Ronnie died in 1979 and Carol died in 1994. He married Karen Flessner Foster in 2009 at Paxton. She survives.

Along with his wife, Karen, he is survived by daughter Debra Rentz (John Gutekanst) of Athens, Ohio, son Carl Rentz of Tuscola; grandsons Sam and Jacob Gutekanst of Athens, Ohio; sister Irene Shumway of Pratt, Kansas; sister-in-law Leona Rentz of Paola, Kansas; daughter-in-law Janice Metcalf of Atwood; three stepchildren, eight step grandchildren, one step great grandson and numerous nieces and nephews.

Leonard worked 24 years as Senior Chemist for U.S. Industrial Chemical Company in Tuscola. He later worked part time at various jobs including driving a mail truck for Taylor Mail Service and other mail contractors and doing seasonal farm work for Duane and Mark Brian for 33 years.

He later volunteered at CU Dialysis for 15 years and was honored for contributing over 10,000 volunteer hours (this is where Karen and Leonard met). Leonard enjoyed sports. He was a KC Royals fan, coached little league baseball for 7 years and played slow pitch softball until he was 45 years old.

Leonard was a former member of Kiwanis in Tuscola where he was honored as Kiwanian of the year and a former member of the American Chemical Society. He was a member of the I & I Antique Tractor Club and First Lutheran Church, Paxton where he sang in the choir. Singing in the choir was his passion.

His hobby was buying, restoring and showing antique farm tractors. Leonard enjoyed traveling and had visited all 50 states and 12 foreign countries. He and his son, Carl attended a baseball game at every major league ballpark.

Memorials may be made to First Lutheran Church, Paxton or the I & I Antique Tractor Club. Please share your memories and condolences with the family at www.baierfuneralservices.com.

Earl E. Benschneider

Earl Edward Benschneider, age 86 of Allerton, IL., passed away April 8, 2021 at Carle Hospital in Urbana, IL.

Funeral services were held at 12:00 p.m. on Monday April 12, 2021, visitation was two hours prior to the service in the Joines Funeral Home, Villa Grove, IL., with Pastor Duane Piercy officiating, burial was in the St. Johns Cemetery, Broadlands, IL.

Earl was born Jan. 31, 1937, a son of Ehrhardt and Pearl (Kirby) Benschneider, he married Phyllis Jiles on Sept. 16, 1962 in Leroy, IL.

He is survived by his wife, two sisters, Carol Snyder of Urbana and Karen Andrews of Tolono, two sons, Mark of Hoopeston and Paul of Catlin, son in law Rodney Herrell of Bloomington, eight grandchildren, Matt Benschneider, Emily (Marcus) Rose, Brooke (Tyrone) Atwood, Arron (Katie) Benschneider, Cody (Ashley) Benschneider, Heather Benschneider, Stephen and Samantha Herrell, Seventeen great grandchildren, Coltin, Traitin, Bryson, Easton, Mason, Bree' Layden, Lyn' Brajiah, Marcus Jr., Remyngtyn, Braylee, Trededy, Peytynn, Zoe, Zaelee, Kinlee, Hunter and Madelynn, and several nieces and nephews that loved their Big E. Earl was preceded in death by his beloved daughter Mary, great grandson Easton Lane, his parents, brother Ronnie and brother in law John Andrews.

Earl was a member of the Victory Church in Camargo, IL. He lived on the family farm his whole life and retired from farming in 1999. He was known for his good sense of humor and never met a stranger. He enjoyed going to Gordyville activities, state fair, tractor pulls and local town festivals. In the winter he would be seen with his green tractor and snow blade cleaning out driveways of family and friends. Most of all he loved spending time with his grandchildren.

Memorials can be made to the Allerton Fire Department of an organization of the donor's choice.



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