

Obituaries

Mary Flenniken

Mary Lou Flenniken, 93, of Bement, passed away at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at the Arbor Rose in Monticello, with her daughters by her side.

Memorial services will be held at 1 p.m. on Thursday, March 23, at the Hinds Funeral Home, 348 N. Piatt St., Bement. Visitation will be held from 12 noon until time of services at the funeral home. The Pastor Naomi Roberts will officiate. Burial will be in the Bement Township Cemetery. Memorial contributions can be made to the Bement E.M.T.s or the American Red Cross.

Mary was born on July 28, 1929, in rural Bement. She was the 10th of 11 children born to Thomas and Elena Redman. She attended Bement High School where she met and later married John Ward Flenniken on June 10, 1947. Mary and John had four children, Patricia Ann Brewer (Paul), John Michael, Cindy Lou, and Charles Thomas.

Mary was a lifelong housewife and farmed alongside her husband until his death in 1989, and then her son.



Flenniken

Mary's work ethic and service to her community and family were tremendous. During her life she donated over 100 gallons of blood. She volunteered reading to schoolchildren with the Farm Bureau Women's Club. Mary was a talented gardener and loved to share her vegetables with family and friends, especially sweetcorn. She loved nature and promoted conservation. She was always willing to help her family whenever she could by spending time with her grand-

children, making trips to the field, or making her famous milkshakes and noodles.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents; husband; and sons, Charlie in 1998, and Mike in 2019; and one granddaughter, Angela. She is survived by her two daughters, Ann Brewer and Cindy Lou Flenniken; seven grandchildren, Pam Utterback, Bart (Jenny) Brewer, Brandie King, Michelle (Blake Wiedenheft) Flenniken, Eric Flenniken, Mara Flenniken, and Amanda Flenniken. She has eight great-grandchildren, Harlen (Holly) Utterback, Tyler (Kinji) Erixon, Amaya King, Boyd and John Brewer, Aedyn and Owen Flenniken, and Pier-son.

Mary will be missed by her family but the lessons she taught by how she lived and the joyful memories made will live on forever in our hearts.

Aaron and Susie Hinds of Hinds Funeral Home & Cremation Services, are proud to honor the life of Mary Lou Flenniken. "Our Family is Here to Serve Your Family." Please visit our website at www.hindsfuneralhome.com to offer condolences.

Bobby Benson

Robert D. "Bobby" Benson, 50, of Bement, passed away on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 10:15 a.m., at his residence in Bement.

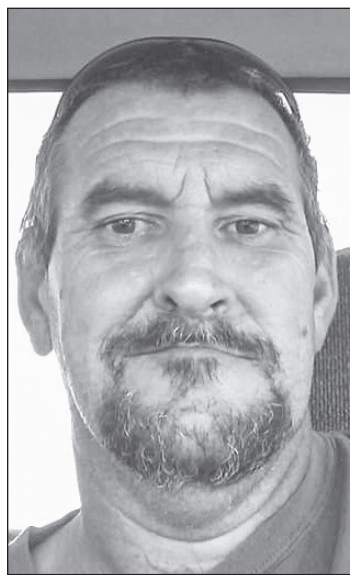
Visitation was Tuesday, March 14, at the Hinds Funeral Home, Bement, followed by the funeral service. Pastor Lenny Summar officiated. Private burial will be in the Bement Township Cemetery. Memorial contributions can be made to the American Cancer Society.

Bobby was born on July 25, 1972, in Monticello, a son of Robert and Brenda Benson Johnson. Bobby is survived by his mother, Brenda Johnson of

Bement; daughter, Ryli Benson of Bement; son, Ryan Durbin of Decatur; two step-daughters, Andrea Osborne and Shae White, both of Cerro Gordo; brother, Darren (Sarah) Benson of Paxton; nephew, Everett Benson of Paxton; as well as several aunts, uncles and cousins. He was preceded in death by his father.

Bobby was a truck driver; he loved being outdoors especially fishing.

Aaron and Susie Hinds of Hinds Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Bement, have the honor to serve the family of Robert David Benson, "Our Family is Here to Serve Your Family." Please visit our website at [www.hindsfuneral-](http://www.hindsfuneralhome.com)



Benson

www.hindsfuneralhome.com to offer condolences.

John Otto

John Otto, 83, of Arthur, passed away at 8:20 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at his residence.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, March 11, at the HCK West Building, Arthur. Bishop Harvey L. Chupp officiated. Burial was in the Otto Cemetery in rural Arthur. Visitation was Thursday, March 9, and Friday, March 10, all at the HCK West Building. The Edwards Funeral Home assisted with arrangements.

John was born on December 2, 1939, in Moultrie County. He was a son of Rudy D. and

Elizabeth J. (Miller) Otto. He married Irene A. Schrock on December 6, 1960, in Arthur.

He is survived by his wife, Irene Otto of Arthur; four children, Ervin Otto of Claypool, Ind., Mary Herschberger and her husband Glen of Arthur, Katie Gingerich and her husband Melvin of Arthur, and Joe Otto and his wife Edna Fern of Arthur; 29 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; nine siblings, Anna Beachy of Sullivan, Cora Otto of Arthur, Esther Mast and her husband Andy of Arthur, Sarah Ann Helmuth of Sullivan, Melvin Otto and his wife Annie Ellen of Arthur, Irene Miller of Arthur, Erwin

Otto and his wife Millie of Arthur, Dorothy Hostetler of Arcola, and Martha Mast and her husband Andy of Fulton, Mo.; and one brother-in-law, Joe Yoder of Wagoner, S.C.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one grandson, Kevin Ray Gingerich; and two siblings, Mary Yoder and Abraham Otto.

John was a member of the Old Order Amish Church.

He had worked at Horizon Home Center in Arthur for several years and most recently he worked at M&E Woodcraft in Cadwell for the past 20 years.

Maxine Chapman

Maxine B. Chapman, 98, of Atwood, passed away at 4 p.m., Monday, March 6, 2023, at the Good Samaritan Hospital, Mt. Vernon.

Funeral services celebrating her life were held Saturday, March 11, at the Hilligoss Shrader Funeral Home, Atwood. Burial was in the Mackville Cemetery, Atwood.

Visitation was held Saturday at the funeral home.

Maxine was born on December 14, 1924, in Atwood, the daughter of Harry and Adeline Thomas Bishop. She married Emerson M. Chapman on July 23, 1942, in Fredericktown, Mo. He preceded her in death on December 1, 2012.

Survivors include her daughter, Jody McKelvey and husband, Mike of Mt. Vernon; son, Tony Chapman and wife, Alana of Bolingbrook; daughter-in-law, Cheryl Chapman of Atwood; grandchildren, Kim Meeks, David Chapman, Erica (Brock) Casteel, Andy McKelvey and fiancée, Marin-



Chapman

da Phillips, Jordan (Lucy) McKelvey, Peyton Chapman, Jenna Chapman (Joe Miller) and Kourtney Chapman; eight great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; and a great-grandson and great-great-grandson that are due in 2023.

She was preceded in death by her parents; two sons, Cary Chapman and Craig Chapman; five brothers; and three sisters.

Maxine was a member of the Lake Fork United Church of Christ, James Reeder American Legion Auxiliary and a life member of the Order of Eastern Star.

She worked as a bookkeeper for Chapman Minneapolis-Moline dealership, then as a postal clerk alongside her husband, who was the Atwood Postmaster, from 1962 until 1990. Maxine went to work for John Lyons Insurance in 1991 until her retirement in 2015.

She enjoyed being in the Clown ministry at her church, reading, making crafts and sewing.

Maxine's family would like to thank her many friends and the staff members at Friendship Hill for all their love and support given to her over the past 8 years while she was a resident there.

Memorials are suggested to the Lake Fork United Church of Christ, rural Atwood. Online condolences may be shared via hilligossshraderfh.com.

Sharon Bullock

Sharon L. Bullock, 83, of Mattoon, died at 11:30 p.m. Monday, March 6, 2023, at Odd Fellow-Rebekah Home in Mattoon.

Private family graveside services were held Monday, March 13, at the Arthur Cemetery, Arthur, with Pastor Jill Bunker officiating. Shrader Funeral Home, Arthur, assisted the family with arrangements. There was no public visitation.

Sharon was born February 11, 1940, in Arthur, the daughter of Burgess and Mary Mae Sexton Harden. She married Roger Bullock on December 15, 1957.

She is survived by her hus-



Bullock

band, Roger Bullock of Mattoon; three sons, Jay (Lisa)

Bullock of Monticello; Dan (Janice) Bullock of Mattoon; Barry (Kamisha Santrock) Bullock of rural Cumberland County; sister, Marilyn (Gary) Wright of Merrill, Wis.; eight grandchildren; and eight great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents; one brother; and two sisters.

Sharon had been employed at RR Donnelley, Mattoon, in the quality control department.

Memorials are suggested to the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation, 230 E. Ohio Street, Ste. 500, Chicago, IL 60611.

Online condolences to the family may be sent to www.hilligossshraderfh.com.

Kenny Bontrager

Kenneth R. Bontrager, 63, of Sullivan, passed away Monday, March 6, 2023, at 9:26 p.m. at his home surrounded by his family.

Kenny was born on October 22, 1959, in Tuscola. He was the son of Raymond C. and Ella A. (Miller) Bontrager. He married Goldie (Miller) Bontrager on November 10, 1979. They enjoyed 43 years together. They have three daughters, Jessica Jess and husband Gary of Englewood, Fla., Kendra Bontrager of Sullivan, Meagan Bontrager living at home; and one grandson, Gibson Bontrager.

Kenny grew up on a farm in rural Sullivan and has been a successful businessman in farming, manufacturing, and trucking.

Kenny was ordained as a pastor at North Vine Mennonite Church on October 31, 1999, where he served as assistant pastor until God called him to be the founding pastor of Solid Rock Chapel in February of 2005 where he served until his illness made it impossible to continue. His passion was studying and teaching Bible prophecy and how it relates to current events. Making complicated texts understandable was a gift of his.

Kenny was an entrepreneur at heart and purchased Central Wood Products in 2001.

He retired from there in March of 2022.

Kenny had many interests and talents. He loved to read and authored a book in 2012 that combined his love of reading and political fiction with his passion for sharing the love and forgiveness of Jesus with others.

He loved music and taught music theory for a few years when his daughters were in school. He also led several chorus groups over the years and led music in church.

He enjoyed working on anything with a motor, including tractors and farm equipment, but also building and pulling mini-rods in tractor pulls in his younger days. More recently, he enjoyed his 1968 Chev-elle.

Kenny and Goldie loved to travel and enjoyed taking trips in their motorhome and meeting up with many friends across the country.

Kenny loved spending time with his grandson, Gibson. They loved to go fishing, camping, playing games, and just hanging out together.

Kenny was preceded in death by his parents, Ray and Ella Bontrager; two brothers, Willis Bontrager and Ernest Bontrager; one sister-in-law, Sarah Ann Miller; and one nephew, Mark Bontrager.

He will be lovingly remembered by his wife, Goldie Bon-



Bontrager

trager; daughters, Jessica, Kendra, and Meagan; grandson, Gibson; son-in-law, Gary; three sisters, Marie Kuhns and husband Dan of Arthur, Ruth Kuhns and husband Gary of Tuscola, and Judy Herschberger and husband Darrell of Tuscola; one sister-in-law, Esther Kurtz and husband Nelson of Sullivan; and many nieces, nephews, and friends and church family.

Visitation was Thursday, March 9, and Friday, March 10. The funeral service was held on Saturday, March 11. All services were held at Solid Rock Chapel, Sullivan. Burial was at Greenhill Cemetery. Edwards Funeral Home of Arcola assisted with arrangements.

Memorials can be made to Solid Rock Chapel.

Bob Lowder

Robert "Bob" Eugene Lowder passed away on March 5, 2023, with family at his side.

He was born July 26, 1934, in rural Lovington, to Thelma (Brown) and Dallas Lowder. Bob grew up in the family farmhouse, where a typical day involved milking cows, walking beans, and gathering eggs—plus a healthy dose of shenanigans with his siblings. Bob's parents, as well as his brothers, Kenneth and Charles, preceded him in death. Bob is survived by his sister, Sheralyn Ritter, and her husband Tom, who live in Mattoon.

Bob went to Arthur High School, where he was the manager of the football and basketball teams, and he excelled in science, math, and industrial arts. His industrial arts teacher noticed his natural skill and helped him start as a draftsman at Progress Industries in Arthur.

He sat in front of Ruth Ann Arganbright during one of his math classes, and he would often turn around in his chair to chat and help her with assignments. During his junior year, with snow blanketing the ground, he took Ruth on their first date. He drove to her parents' house to pick her up, and on their way to the school play, his car broke down! Bob and Ruth walked the rest of the way in the snow—the first of many memorable moments in 70-plus years together. On



Lowder

March 28, 1959, Bob and Ruth were married at Vine Street Christian Church in Arthur.

Bob was part of an Operation Gyroscope unit in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—a program that rotated divisions of service members out of overseas service together, rather than individually. He "gyro'd over" to Germany in 1957, where he spent 18 months building roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. He picked up many German phrases while there, and he loved to break into German to entertain (and mystify) his children and grandchildren.

When Bob returned from Army service, he went back to work at Progress Industries for 30-plus years. He was a born engineer who could create, deconstruct, or rebuild almost anything, and he worked hard to earn his engineering

degree.

In 1986, Bob and Gery Conlin started Mid-State Tank in Sullivan. Mid-State started with eight people, and it grew to employ more than 150 people. Bob retired in 1999 and continued to serve on the Board of Directors for Mid-State Tank for many years. Bob was very proud of Mid-State, and as his coworkers used to say, "We built this in Ruth's kitchen!"

Bob is survived by three wonderful children, Robert Allen Lowder of Irvine, Calif., Marilyn (Kevin) Maffett of Bloomington, and Marcia (Greg) Stiff of St. Peters, Mo.

Bob's kids nicknamed him "MacGyver" for his remarkable ability to build or fix anything. After dinner, you could usually find him in his garage workshop. He built many custom elements of their family home on Illinois Street: a laundry chute, a secret liquor cabinet, large sliding doors with hand-painted lettering, and a Frosty the Snowman figure with a motorized top hat. He took apart a VW bus to create a family camper that they took on trips to Yellowstone, Florida, Colorado, Turkey Run, and more, often singing "Indiana Wants Me" from the driver's seat along the way. On a nice day in Arthur, you could see Bob taking Ruth, his kids, or his grandkids on a ride in the 1952 MG convertible that he built.