

Rose Marie Contos

August 12, 1929 - May 9, 2014





Rose Marie's Life Story

Rose Marie Contos was a woman whose sincere kindness and loving nature leaves a forever imprint on our hearts. To those she held dear, Rose Marie was a devoted woman to her faith and family. The legacy she leaves behind continues each time loving thoughts of her bring a warm smile to the hearts of all who knew and loved her. With lasting memories to be forever cherished, she will be deeply missed.

The year 1929 was a time of mixed blessings in our nation. Prohibition was in full swing, while families enjoyed the debut of Amos and Andy, and became thrilled by the first public television demonstration. However, the crash of the stock market was the beginning of the Great Depression which began an era of great hardship for many. Yet for Harry and Waldeana (Goulette) Damm of Kalamazoo, Michigan, there was nothing as exciting as the blessed birth of their little girl, Rose Marie on August 12, 1929.

From her earliest beginnings, Rose Marie was a bundle of energy. The second of two daughters, Rose Marie also joined her eight year old sister, Irene. As a family they attended St. Joseph Catholic Church, and Rose Marie attended the St. Joseph grade school. During her youth, her father bought her a football which made her a friend of many. She was the only one on Jackson Street on the city's east side where they made their home who had a football, and needless to say, all the boys were always asking her to come over . . . with her football!

Rose Marie graduated in 1947 from Nazareth high school and went on to study at Kalamazoo College where she earned her BA Degree. After her college graduation, she received training at Bronson Hospital School of Medical Technology and landed a job working as a medical technician with Dr. Hazel Prentice.

As a young woman, Rose Marie concentrated on her career. During this time, she was dating a young man, but it was his roommate, Harry Contos, hailing from Columbus, Georgia, who eventually won her heart. Harry was attending Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo and at the time worked for the Kalamazoo Gazette. Smitten from the start, there was no place the young couple was meant to be other than together. After dating for a time, Rose Marie and Harry shared vows of marriage at St Joseph Church on July 26, 1952.

Before long, Harry and Rose Marie were headed to North Platte, Nebraska where Harry got a job as the editor of the local paper there. During this time, they were overjoyed with the blessing of children. David came long in 1953, and Catherine





followed in 1954. When Harry began commuting to Notre Dame to pursue his law degree, Rose Marie returned to Kalamazoo where she and the children lived with her parents. Rose Marie worked for the next three years while her parents helped out with the kids. It was trying at times during this arrangement in their lives, but Harry and Rose Marie would be the first to agree it was well worth it.

After Harry graduated in 1959 from law school, he and Rose Marie purchased their family home together just one block from her parents. Rose Marie then became a full-time mother as she tended to David and Catherine, and also the addition of Richard in 1962, and Stephen who completed their family in 1965.

Rose Marie made a good home for Harry and the children. Many memorable times were shared over the years enjoying the holidays, neighborhood and school events as well as their involvement at church. Their home was always open and welcome to the kid's friends and later their pool was an added pleasure whenever visiting the Contos home.

It was Rose Marie's delicious homemade berry pies that became her specialty. She was a good cook, too, but with her food allergies to milk, chocolate, peanuts, corn, and wheat germ, among others, she had to watch her diet. Always resourceful, when her family was young, Rose Marie liked canning from her small garden and goods she picked up at the local farmer's market. She was also a talented seamstress, making dress hats for church that she and Cathy wore. Throughout the years she made clothing for herself and Cathy, as well.

In later years, Rose Marie picked up the art of weaving. She loved weaving and even became part of a weaving guild. Always artistically inclined, she made beautiful wall hangings and blankets, not to mention her special Christmas ornaments. Rose Marie enjoyed the holidays where her family, now grown with families of their own, gathered. She went all out decorating her home. Rose Marie also collected baskets, and literally hundreds of them! She also collected sheep, which went along with her weaving. She acquired many stuffed sheep and figurines, especially those from designer, Tom Clark.

Having hosted many summer choir parties at their home for the St. A's Choir, Rose Marie was a gracious hostess, and came by it quite naturally. She and Harry welcomed all with open arms. Even though Rose Marie could be feisty from time to time, she and Harry genuinely took interest in the lives of others. They were the greatest companions, and complimented one another beautifully. They became great friends with several neighbors, and were always willing to lend a hand for anyone in need. Quite often she and her good friend and neighbor, Helen went shopping together.

For many years, Rose Marie played bridge. She was a good player, and took membership in a bridge group. She favored listening to church



music, and with Harry's beautiful singing voice, she always found comfort listening to his wonderful voice.

During retirement, Rose Marie and Harry enjoyed a little traveling. One year they went to Greece, and after all the kids were gone, they enjoyed European vacations. She was an avid reader of mysteries, and when watching TV, she liked *Murder She Wrote*, *Wheel of Fortune*, and *Jeopardy!* Whenever she could, Rose Marie especially enjoyed having her grandkids over. Spending time with them and watching them grow was always a source of pride and joy for her.

Following Harry's death in 2010, Rose Marie began living at Wyndham West for assisted living. For the last two and a half years, she resided at the Friendship Village Nursing Home where she sadly died. Deeply missed, she will be fondly remembered.

At the age of 84, Rose Marie Contos, of Kalamazoo, died on Friday, May 9, 2014 at Friendship Village, Kalamazoo. She was preceded her in death by her husband, Harry Contos in 2010 and by her sister and brother-in-law, Irene and Henry Longjohn. Members of her family include her four children: David (Lynn) Contos, Catherine (Robert) Metzler, Richard (Celine) Contos and Stephen (Pamula) Contos; seven grandchildren: Brian Contos, Ryan Metzler, Sara Metzler, Christie Contos, Alexis Contos, Lauren Contos and Timothy Contos; two great-grandchildren: Maddyson and Cameron; many



nieces and nephews. Visit with Rose Marie's family and friends while sharing stories, food and drinks on Tuesday from 5-7 PM at the Life Story Funeral Home, Betzler-Kalamazoo, 6080 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo 375-2900. The Mass of Christian Burial will be Wednesday, 10:30 AM at St. Augustine Cathedral followed by a luncheon in the Cathedral Center. Private burial at will take place at Mt. EverRest Cemetery. Please visit Rose Marie's personal memory page at www.lifestorynet.com where you can archive a favorite memory or photo and sign her guestbook before coming to the funeral home. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Augustine Cathedral or Friendship Village.



Are you missing Obituaries in Kalamazoo?

Sign up for a daily obituary update by visiting LifeStoryNet.com/kalamazoo-obituaries. Here you will also find the area obituary list - a free and permanent source for all local obituaries.

