



## Erma L Zilly

February 19, 1941 - September 28, 2018

Erma L. (Marzen) Zilly, 77, of Mason City, died Friday (September 28, 2018) at her home in Mason City.

A Funeral Mass will be held at 10:30 am on Friday, Oct. 5, 2018 at Epiphany Parish – St. Joseph Catholic Church, 302 5th St. SE, Mason City, with the Rev. Jacob Rouse as Celebrant. Burial will follow in Elmwood St Joseph Cemetery, Mason City.

Visitation will be held one hour prior to the Mass at the church on October 5th, 2018 at 9:30 a.m.

In lieu of customary remembrances, memorials may be left in Erma's name in care of her family.

Erma Louise Van Lent was born on February 19, 1941, in Mason City, a daughter of Louis and Elsie (Engels) Van Lent. She attended and graduated from St. Patrick's High School in Dougherty. She married Louis Marzen Jr. on November 28, 1959. The couple was blessed with five children, Randy, Laura, Ralph, Daniel and Luke.

On October 3, 1992 Erma was united in marriage to Edward Paul Zilly in Chicago, Illinois. Together they were blessed with 25 years of marriage.

After their retirement, they moved to the Harper's Ferry area. In June of 2010 Edward and Erma moved to Mason City and spent many hours enjoying nature and fishing in Clear Lake.

Those grateful in sharing her life are her children, Randy (Kari) Marzen, Marion, IA, Laura Wilkens, Des Moines, IA, Daniel Marzen, Hampton, IA, Luke Marzen, Auburn, AL; her step-children, Paul Zilly, Trego, WI, and Tracey Banks, Verona, WI; grandchildren, Nate, Jake, Conner, Chloe Marzen, and Jenna Huether, Adam Meyer, Jordan and Sam Wilkens, Ethan Marzen, Kristie Bales, Jamie Goltz, Chelsea Lorenzen, and Cole Marzen; step-grandchildren, Joshua Zilly and Dylan Banks; 16 great grandchildren; her brothers Walt (Midge) Van Lent, Joseph (Lora) Van Lent and Leonard (Pat) Van Lent, along with extended relatives and friends.

Erma is preceded in death by her parents, son Ralph James Marzen, three sisters, Helen Fitzgerald, Mary Murphy and Emily Denson, an infant sister Florence, and her brother Ted Van Lent, her first husband Louis Marzen Jr. and her husband Edward Zilly.

Erma has been remembered by her children and grand-children as the matriarch of a large family, with a steadfast faith in God and boundless love for her children. She grew up on a dairy farm near Dougherty, Iowa, where she met her first husband Louis Marzen, Jr., a serviceman and farmer from Dougherty, and they fell in love while dancing the jitterbug. She was known for being able to drive a tractor, grow a half acre garden and perfectly manicured yard, tend chickens, can, sew, bake, and throw a mean bowling ball. She always dressed impeccably for mass, which she never missed. Her mother passed when she was a toddler, so her relationship with her siblings was very strong. She passed those loving qualities onto her own children. She lived in Dougherty, Dubuque and Hampton, Iowa where she worked at Atkinson's Clothing and First National Bank as she relocated with her husband Louis who worked for the USDA.

After his passing, Erma married Edward Zilly and moved to Chicago, Illinois where she was a book-keeper in the chemicals industry and was held in high regard for her management skills. After she semi-retired, she built a home in the bluffs near Harper's Ferry Iowa, where she spent her days working part time at Ace Hardware.

Some of her favorite past times were boating on the Mississippi and salmon fishing on Lake Michigan, snowmobiling and cooking and baking. She loved her dogs, Hank and Katie, her ornery cat, Hamlet. Ed and Erma enjoyed the snowy winters and warm summers with family visiting for Christmas ski trips or summer bonfires overlooking the Yellow River forest. It was a magical time.

In her twilight days, she and her husband moved to a town home in Mason City where she continued to host large family holidays, insisting on doing most of the cooking and tending her beautiful and spotless home and flowers which was part of her Belgian heritage. Erma always put others first, had simple tastes but mostly enjoyed the company of friends and neighbors, coffee and a good book. She loved her family deeply, enjoyed many visits from her siblings, and loved her Friday nights out with her aunt, sister-in-laws and close friends. She was admired deeply by her children and grand-children for being the "rock" of the family, for her independence, her strong will and principles, taking care of her son Ralph who passed in 2017 from diabetes, and being a brave, loving role-model. She will be missed, but we know she's in a better place with God.

# Cemetery

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## Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery

1224 South Washington

Mason City, IA,

# Events

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**OCT** **Visitation** 09:30AM - 10:30AM

**5**

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Epiphany Parish - St. Joseph Catholic Church  
300 5th St. S.E., Mason City, IA, US, 50401

**OCT** **Mass of Christian Burial** 10:30AM

**5**

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Epiphany Parish - St. Joseph Catholic Church  
300 5th St. S.E., Mason City, IA, US, 50401

# Comments

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Laura Wilkens** - October 07, 2018 at 11:49 PM

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“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Erma L Zilly.



October 04, 2018 at 11:49 PM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Erma L Zilly.



October 04, 2018 at 12:25 PM

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“ Patrick and Milissa Knaub and family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Erma L Zilly.



**Patrick and Milissa Knaub and family** - October 04, 2018 at 11:56 AM

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Erma L Zilly.



October 03, 2018 at 10:59 AM

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“ Randy, So sorry for the loss of you mom. I always had a lot of fun with her at bowling in Hampton! My condolences to you and your families.

Marlene Borchardt Williams

**Marlene Williams** - October 03, 2018 at 10:04 AM

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“ Randy, Laura, Danny, & Luke  
I'm so sorry for the loss of your mom. What a beautifully written obituary for Irma.  
Thinking of you all very much!  
hugs, Dawn (Hovenga) Foy

**Dawn (Hovenga) Foy** - October 02, 2018 at 11:07 PM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Erma L Zilly.



October 02, 2018 at 08:10 PM