

**Darlene Kenkel, 77****May 15, 1938 - Jan. 31, 2016**

**EARLING** — Darlene Bernice Kenkel was born on May 15, 1938 to Henry and Frances (Gubbels) Heller in Portsmouth. She was baptized and confirmed at St. Mary Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church where she also attended school and graduated with the Class of 1956.

September 30, 1957, Darlene was united in marriage to Jim Kenkel while he was home on leave from the Army. Together they returned to Fort Polk Army Base in DeRidder, LA, where their first daughter, Kathy, was born. In October of 1958,

they moved to Earling, to make their home and grow their family. Over the next several years, Jeff, Karla, and Michelle were born. In addition to being a dedicated mother to her four children, Darlene was also employed at Farmer's Trust and Savings Bank in Earling, where she retired in 2001. After her retirement, Darlene enjoyed working part-time at the Harlan Flower Shop and The Flower Barn. She also enjoyed working outside with her lawn and flowers, took pride in decorating and remodeling her home, and generously gave back to her church through participation in the Catholic Daughters of America and Eucharistic Minister program.

Since August of 2015, Darlene fought a courageous battle against multiple myeloma. Darlene died on Sunday, January 31, 2016 at Hillcrest Hospice Care and Rehab Center in Bellevue, NE, having attained the age of seventy-seven years, eight months, and sixteen days.

Darlene was preceded in death by her parents, Henry and Frances Heller and sister Elaine Buckley. She is survived by her husband of fifty-eight years Jim Kenkel of Earling; children: Kathy and her husband Dr. Stephen Welsh of Columbia, MO, Jeff Kenkel and his wife Michelle of Omaha, NE, Karla and her husband Tom Anderson of Overland Park, KS, and Michelle Kenkel Powell of Logan; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild; brothers and sisters: Alvin Heller of Harlan, Mary and her husband Bob Finken of Earling, Rich Heller of Portsmouth, Bonnie and her husband Gene Thielen of Denver, CO, Phil Heller and his wife Doramae of Portsmouth, RoseAnn Schnuettgen of Avoca, and Veral Heller and his wife Mary of Green Valley, AZ; brother-in-law Harold Buckley of Panama; other family members and friends.

Rev. Guthrie Dolan celebrated the 2:00 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial on Saturday, February 6, 2016 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Earling. Mary Wilwerding accompanied Craig Kenkel and St. Joseph's Choir. Serving as casket bearers were Dennis Buckley, Ron Lewis, Stephen Welsh, Colin Kenkel, Mike Heller, and Ron Heller. Burial was held at St. Joseph's Cemetery in Earling.



**Pauley Jones**  
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION

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