

## Rita Lyon, 91

May 28, 1918 - Nov. 14, 2009

**HARLAN** — Rita Margaret Lyon, the daughter of John and Margaret Stein Rath, was born on May 28, 1918, in Portsmouth. Rita's mother died when she was only three years old so she was raised by other family members in Neola, Persia, Portsmouth and by her grandmother Anna Stein in Harlan. She attended school in Neola and Harlan until the tenth grade when she quit school and worked as a waitress at the White Star Café in Harlan.



July 27, 1939, Rita was united in marriage to Clare Lyon in Omaha, NE. They became the parents of three children: Barbara, John and Sandy. After their marriage, they lived in Harlan for a short time but soon traveled in a trailer throughout the Midwest while Clare was employed by Western Electric. The couple worked and traveled with other Western Electric employees and became a tight knit community. This was a time Rita enjoyed very much. In 1951, they returned to Harlan where Clare took over his father's plumbing business, Lyon Plumbing and Heating. During this time, Rita helped run the shop by answering the phone and doing the book work. Rita loved to iron and did not only the family ironing, but she also took in ironing for other people. She enjoyed her children and grandchildren, as well as the children she babysat for. Pinochle was a favorite card game for her as was penny poker and bingo. They retired in 1979 and began spending half the year in Arizona and half in Harlan. In 1989 they celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary and became residents of Albuquerque, NM. It was here that Clare died on September 21, 1997. Rita returned to Harlan after her husband's death and made her home in the Westridge Apartments and attended St. Michael's Catholic Church. In 2004, Rita became a resident of Little Flower Haven in Earling, and it was here that she died on November 14, 2009, having attained the age of ninety-one years, five months and seventeen days.

In addition to her parents and husband, Rita was preceded in death by her son-in-law Jerry Onnen, her sister Mildred Lorenz Fiscus and half-sisters Dorothy Stangl and Delores Sperry. She is survived by her children: Barbara Onnen of Harlan, John Lyon and his wife Kay of Payson, AZ, and Sandy and her husband Jim Sondag of Lathrop, MO; eight grandchildren; eleven great grandchildren; half sisters Maryann Zellmer of Huntington Beach, CA and Bettie Thielen of Westminster, CA; nieces and nephews; other relatives and many friends.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Tuesday, November 17, 2009, at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Harlan, with Rev. Robert

Hoefler celebrating the 11:00 AM service. Interment was held at the Harlan Cemetery with Mike Onnen, Chris Chapman, David Molton, Chris Schmitt, Donald Sondag, and James Sondag serving as casket bearers.

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