



Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski

January 14, 1924 - January 5, 2015

Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski, age 90, went to her Eternal Home on January 5, 2015, surrounded by her loving family. She was born January 14, 1924 to Ida (Perala) and John Kokko at her Perala (now commonly known as Berala) grandparents' home in Rudyard, Michigan. The home still stands at over 100 years old. They lived on Seymour Street in Sault Ste. Marie for a short time before moving to a farm in Rudyard.

Wilma attended the Fractional-Carolina Country School, then graduated from Rudyard High School in 1941. During her senior trip to Washington DC, she first became aware of all the roadside litter the closer they got to the capitol. Later in life she made a point of picking up the roadside litter along H-40 during her daily walks—which she continued well into her 80's.

After high school, Wilma worked at Fort Brady in Sault Ste. Marie and then at Selfridge Field near Mount Clemens, Michigan until she was called home because her mother was ill. After her mother's death, Wilma continued to care for her father and siblings.

Wilma loved to dance, and she met Isaac "Ike" Malaski at a community dance in the Soo. She and Ike were married on November 3, 1945 when he returned from overseas serving in WWII with the 82nd Airborne, and together they had four children.

In addition to raising their family, Wilma helped manage their Grade A dairy farm. She later worked at the Commissary at Kincheloe Air Force Base and then as an administrative assistant for the Farmer's Home Administration, where she finished her federal civil service career and retired in 1986.

Wilma was an active member of St. James Lutheran Church in Rudyard and served on the church council for several years. She was also a charter member of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary of the English-Wallis post in Rudyard, holding officer positions—including president—numerous times. Wilma enjoyed history, and was a member of the Rudyard Historical Society. One of her favorite pastimes was reading “old stuff” about family and local history—school, community, friends, etc. She and Ike were active in the community, and were chosen Rudyard's Citizens of the Year in 1998.

Wilma enjoyed her family and “those dear grandchildren”, plus all her many relatives and friends. She loved inviting people into her home and, according to her grandchildren, made “World Famous” cheeseburgers. She genuinely cared about people and always greeted them with a smile and a warm hug, and devoted herself to the well-being of others. She visited those confined to their homes or the hospital, and would often bring a gift of homemade bread or Finnish nissua. Wilma was especially known for sending cards and letters—remembering birthdays and anniversaries of her family and friends, her church family, and numerous members of the community. Her address books and journal of important dates were important possessions.

Wilma leaves behind her four children, 11 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren, daughter, Jane Marie True of Rudyard and her sons Vernon Thomas and Robert James; son, James Isaac married to Sandra (Kaunisto) of Alpena, Michigan; daughter, Margaret Ann married to Steven D. Stutz of Rives Junction, Michigan and their three children, Keenan Michael married to

Denise, Melia Nichole married to Jared Putnam, and Steven Japheth married to Heather; son, Robert John married to Annette (McDowell) and their six children, Brandon James married to Becky, Brent Robert married to Kaitlyn, Alex Michael, Rebecca Nicole, Monica Anne Marie, and Robert Isaac; and great grandchildren, Eden Shahla Putnam (Melia and Jared) and Parker James and Kinley Rose Malaski (Brandon and Becky). She will also be missed by her sister, Martha Watts of Ferndale, Michigan; sister-in-law, Glenda Kay Kokko of Rudyard; and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Wilma was preceded in death by her husband, Isaac Alfred Malaski, on October 20, 2010; parents, John and Ida Kokko, brothers, Wilfred (3-month old infant), Wesley, William (Laurel), and Ben (Elinor) Kokko; sister, Viola Augustson (Norman) and brother-in-law, Jim Watts Sr.

Visitation will be held Friday, January 9, from 4:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. at R. Galer Funeral Home, 24549 S. M-129 in Pickford, Michigan.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, January 10, at 11:00 A.M. at St. James Lutheran Church in Rudyard with Pastor Matthew Lamb conducting the service. Visitation will begin at 10:00 Saturday morning at the church.

Burial will be at Oaklawn Chapel Gardens following the funeral service. Wilma's grandsons will serve as pallbearers.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. James Lutheran Church Scholarship Fund, P. O. Box 156; or Rudyard Area Community Foundation, English-Wallis VFW Fund, P.O. Box 394, both in Rudyard, MI 49780; or to the Hospice of the EUP, 308 W. 12th Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

Wilma's life was filled with the joy of conversation, music and laughter with

family and friends as they enjoyed special occasions together.

Cemetery Details

Oaklawn Chapel Gardens

15264 S. M-129
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN **9**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Family Life Funeral Homes - Pickford
24549 S. M-129
Pickford, MI 49774
(906) 647-3400
flfh@familylifefh.com
<https://www.familylifefuneralhomes.com/>

Visitation

JAN **10**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. James Lutheran Church
11118 W. 3rd Street
Rudyard, MI 49780

Funeral Service

JAN 10. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. James Lutheran Church
11118 W. 3rd Street
Rudyard, MI 49780

Tribute Wall



“ *Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski*

October 05, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ *Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski*

October 02, 2023 at 10:14 PM



“ *Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski*

September 01, 2022 at 07:49 PM



“ *Jane,*

We were so sorry to learn of your mother's passing. I wasn't sure this was your mom until I saw her picture, and then I knew for sure-- you look so much like her !! Losing our parents is a hard thing, but God will sustain you. It was so good to see you last summer at the class reunion.

Judy McCain

Judy McCain - January 31, 2015 at 01:27 PM



“ *My sincere sympathy goes to the family of Wilma, sorry to hear of your lose of such a lovely lady.*

Michelle Lazzari

Michelle Lazzari - January 12, 2015 at 03:50 PM

MR

“ To Bob and the family of Wilma Malaski, our deepest and sincere sympathy on the loss of your mother our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of sorrow.
Mike & Marcia Ruhanen



Mike Ruhanen - January 12, 2015 at 09:20 AM

MK

“ Wilma gave the best hugs, ever, and her enthusiasm for life was contagious. My deepest sympathies go out to her family.

Mary Kahl - January 10, 2015 at 11:46 PM

PB

“ What a lovely, caring person. I worked in the same building with Wilma when she was with the FHA and I was with the Forest Service. We always kept in touch and she never failed to send me a birthday card. She will always be remembered and missed.
Pat Brighton

Pat Brighton - January 10, 2015 at 08:43 AM

PA

“ Paul Connie Kodtey Augustson purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



Paul Connie Kodtey Augustson - January 09, 2015 at 01:17 PM

DK

“ *Lovely lady & most beloved Aunt! ALWAYS made us feel very welcomed & loved! Appreciated her greeting cards, she never missed an occasion to send us one!! She will be very missed! Love to the family!*

David & Diane Kokko

David & Diane Kokko - January 09, 2015 at 01:16 PM

RT

“ *I used to love sitting at the kitchen table watching her make bread. I'd take an entire loaf and a bucket of butter and make toast until it was all gone. She also had an entire freezer of treats that all the grand kids would share. You never left her house hungry. I will miss her letters too. I used to have my mother translate them for me as they were a challenge to follow. I will miss you Grandma, I love you.*

Rob

Rob True - January 09, 2015 at 01:10 PM

DP

“ *Wilma always had a big smile and a big hug each and every time I saw her. She will be missed!!! Hugs and love to her family. We are out of town but will be praying for the family.*

Doris Posey - January 08, 2015 at 09:19 PM

JK

“ *Jonathon Kokko and Jimmy Kinney purchased the Let It Snow for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.*



Jonathon Kokko and Jimmy Kinney - January 08, 2015 at 07:04 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



January 08, 2015 at 10:39 AM



“ Andrew L. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



Andrew L. - January 08, 2015 at 07:29 AM



“ Andy&Sandy Thompson/Families purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



Andy&Sandy Thompson/Families - January 08, 2015 at 06:42 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



January 07, 2015 at 04:51 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



January 07, 2015 at 04:27 PM



“ Walt and JoAnn, Jenny and Andrew, Dan, Joe and Degi purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



Walt and JoAnn, Jenny and Andrew, Dan, Joe and Degi -
January 07, 2015 at 03:51 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



January 07, 2015 at 11:29 AM



“ Let It Snow was purchased for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



January 07, 2015 at 11:25 AM

DS

“ Denise S. purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Wilma Mary (Kokko) Malaski.



Denise S. - January 06, 2015 at 07:24 PM

DV

“ I feel like I've lost an aunt. She was always stopping by at Grandma's and then Mom's house to visit. She was like a fresh breeze blowing in and blowing out, always on the move. Only wonderful memories of this sweet lady. She's earned her rest. Love, Steve and Debbie Viele

Debbie Viele - January 06, 2015 at 12:20 PM

LP

“ So sorry to hear this sad news. Wilma was like a member of our own family and we will miss her and her wonderful letters very much. We shall meet again on that beautiful shore, Wilma.

Lynne Harrison Piippo - January 06, 2015 at 10:06 AM

MB

“ We send our prayers and thoughts to Jane, Jim, Bob and our dear friend Margi and all their families. We met Wilma many years ago. Cathy and I stayed at her home several times. She was always kind and warm. We will miss her.
Warm Regards and Affection
Mike & Cathy Bliss
Leslie, Michigan

Mike Bliss - January 06, 2015 at 07:28 AM

JS

Wilma and Ike were part of the "Greatest Generation" our nation produced. Their family is a testament and lasting memorial to the great couple they were. God Bless, and peace to the Malaski family.

John Sawruk - January 11, 2015 at 07:02 AM

DA

The world has lost such a beautiful soul. Wilma made everyone feel so special, and that she was always so happy to see you. I worked with her at the USDA Service Center from 1983 - 1985. She never forgot my birthday, or my children's birthday, in all those years since! She was my connection to the Soo area after I moved back to Bay City, and kept me updated on everyone with that awesome memory of hers. Her home was always open to every guest and she was the consummate hostess. I learned what baked cheese curds were from her and love them to this day. I will miss her wonderful (& sometimes comical) letters, and the love she shared with everyone. I hope you and Ike are dancing together again, Wilma!

Darlene Ahlberg - January 12, 2015 at 01:33 PM

KL

Any of us who were fortunate enough to have known the kind, gentle, loving spirit of Wilma share a deep sense of loss. Her beautiful family is a true testament to how great a woman she was. Wilma, you will forever live in our hearts.

Ken Langley

Ken Langley - January 17, 2015 at 12:05 PM