



"Her children arise and call her blessed..."
Proverbs 31:28



In Memory Of

Rita Lucille Paulsen



Memorial Mass of Christian Burial

Friday, April 10, 2026 - 10:30 AM

St. Leo Catholic Church - Pipestone, Minnesota

Officiating - Fr. Joshua Miller

Lectors - Tracy Paulsen, Zachary Melcher
& McKenna Melcher

Gift Bearers - Rita's Great-Grandchildren

Altar Servers - Charlie Folkerts, Jake Goelz & Blake
Einck

Scripture Readings

Revelations 21:1-5a, 6b-7 Psalm 63
I Thessalonians 4:13-18 Matthew 11:25-30

Organist - Carol Haubrich

Cantor - Carrie Hiniker

Congregational Hymns

"Lift High the Cross" "We Remember"
"Spirit and Grace" "How Great Thou Art"

Honorary Urn Bearers

"The Rubies"

Kathy Paulsen *Craig Manke*
Richard Wahl Barb Paulsen
Dan Melcher

Inurnment

New Woodlawn Cemetery
Pipestone, Minnesota

Arrangements Entrusted To
HARTQUIST FUNERAL HOME

IN LOVING
Memory



Rita Lucille Paulsen

May 30, 1926 - April 6, 2026

Rita Lucille Wathen was born on a farm south of Pipestone to Victor and Marie (Horrell) Wathen on May 30, 1926; as a small child the family moved to Hatfield, MN where she and her seven siblings attended country school. Upon completion of her education, Rita lived in Pipestone where she cleaned for area families and businesses, and later became employed at the J.C.Penney Department Store. Rita was known for her artistic abilities and soon became responsible for much of the store's signage and displays. It was during work hours one late afternoon that a handsome young man came into the store specifically to buy a pair of gloves from this cute brunette (he did not really need another pair of gloves). After a romantic courtship, on Thanksgiving Day November 22, 1945, despite the below zero temps and raging blizzard, she was united in marriage to Robert Paulsen.

Bob and Rita lived on the Paulsen family farm in Troy Township and were blessed with their five children: Gary, Susan, Deborah, Kevin and Dana, taking pride in watching their children perform in school sports and 4-H activities. Together they enjoyed their summers at the lake and dances in Hatfield. Unfortunately, on November 11, 1965, in 1965, Rita found herself a widow at the young age of 39 and she became responsible for continuing to support and raise her children on her own. In 1979, she moved to town where she continued to support her children and their families.

Rita was a member of the Pipestone Catholic Church and was a member of the Pipestone Chapter of P.E.O., where she worked to promote continuing education and philanthropy to young women; she served as Chapter C President. She truly loved her PEO involvement. In 2010, Rita sold her home and moved to Ridgeview Estates where she enjoyed the new community of friends and social activities, serving as President of the Tenant Committee for two years. After experiencing a stroke in January 2018, Mom moved to the Good Samaritan Community where she lived until 2024. Rita became a resident of the Pipestone County Hospice Home until her passing on Monday, April 4, 2026 at the age of 99 years, 10 months and seven days.

Rita's life was full of family, friends and relished experiences. In 2000, she joined Father Marty and other members of St. Leo's for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Rome, Jerusalem and Bethlehem; a trip she talked about often over later years. Mom enjoyed teaching and performing as a member of the "Wathen Sisters" dance troupe with her sisters Thelma and Patricia; a line-dancing performance was a natural part of every family wedding reception. She once bowled a perfect 300 game, and received her 50-gallon pin from the American Red Cross for her blood donations over the years; that was one of her most meaningful gifts.

Rita's faith in God was her source of strength throughout her life. She is lovingly remembered by her children, Susan (Barb) Paulsen, Kevin (Dan) Melcher, daughter-in-law, Barb Paulsen and son-in-law, Richard Wahl, seven grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband Robert Paulsen, her son Gary, her daughter Deborah, her son-in-law, Jeff Paulsen and Jason and Tyler Manke, son-in-law Gary Manke, and her parents. Rita was the last living sibling of the Wathen family: Lorraine, Mary, Thelma, Cecil, Patricia, Edward and Bernadine.

Rita enjoyed black pepper, crossword puzzles, and playing the Minnesota Tambourine. Most of all, she loved her children unconditionally. That is her life and legacy. Having somewhere to go is a Home. Having someone to love is a Family. Having both is a Blessing. Mom was blessed and our lives were blessed to call her Mom and Grams.



Rita was a longstanding active member (1980) of the Pipestone Chapter of P.E.O., where she worked to promote continuing education and philanthropy to young women; she served as Chapter C President. She truly loved her PEO involvement. In 2010, Rita sold her home and moved to Ridgeview Estates where she enjoyed the new community of friends and social activities, serving as President of the Tenant Committee for two years. After experiencing a stroke in January 2018, Mom moved to the Good Samaritan Community where she lived until 2024. Rita became a resident of the Pipestone County Hospice Home until her passing on Monday, April 4, 2026 at the age of 99 years, 10 months and seven days.

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