



Mary Ilene Kowalski, age 86 of Manistee, passed away at Munson Healthcare Manistee Hospital on Monday, November 18, 2019 to be in the loving arms of God, and to join her beloved husband in heaven.

Ilene was born on Beaver Island, Michigan, the daughter of Hubert and Mary (Gallagher) Aultman. She was very proud of her Irish heritage. Ilene graduated from Manistee High School with the Class of 1952.

Ilene was employed as a waitress at the Bil-Mar Restaurant in Manistee and also Sears Roebuck as a telephone operator prior to her marriage, after which she assisted her husband to build their family business.

Ilene (Aultman) married Ervin A. Kowalski, Sr. at Guardian Angels Catholic Church in Manistee on April 18, 1953. He preceded her in death on October 1, 2017 after 64 years of marriage.

Ilene was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother and she enjoyed her family and home tremendously. She loved to entertain. Ilene enjoyed traveling with her husband extensively throughout their marriage, as well as reading, crossword puzzles, crocheting, and flower arranging. She had a good, but unusual sense of humor. Ilene was eccentric, but fun. She is dearly loved and will be greatly missed.

Ilene played a significant role in the raising of funds for Guardian Angels Catholic Church through their Grand Awards Dinners, as well as the Catholic Services Appeal.

Ilene is survived by her six children: Mary (Gerry) Haw, Rochelle Thomas, Ervin A. (Donna) Kowalski, Jr., Bonita (Harry) Bigalke, Bernadette (John) Duhoski, and Lori Kowalski (Mike Hanna), eight grandchildren: Gary Wilhelm, Jr., Lindsey (Jon) Hanichen, Danielle Kowalski, Jared Hilliard, Kendra Hilliard (Thomas) Elmer, Nicole (Ben) Pavlovic, and Nicholas and Nathan Duhoski; and three great grandchildren: Mia and Carter Hanichen, and Blake Elmer. She is also survived by her sister Margaret Sullivan, and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Ilene was a communicant of Divine Mercy Parish. She was a strong supporter of Manistee Catholic Central Schools and Right to Life of Michigan.

She was preceded in death by her husband, her parents, her mother-in-law and father-in-law Mary and Felix Kowalski, one brother and sister-in-law Charles and Carol Aultman, her sisters and brothers-in-law: Matilda and Art Kowalski, Helen Agnes (in infancy), Rita and Robert Skipski, Victor Sullivan, her son-in-law Gary Wilhelm, Sr., and her sister-in-law and brother-in-law Clara and Harry Strzyzewski.

The family will be at the Herbert Funeral Home to receive friends on Thursday, November 21, 2019 from 5 to 7 p.m. with a rosary to follow at 7 p.m.

The family will be at Herbert Funeral Home on Friday, November 22, 2019 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. when they will proceed to Divine Mercy Parish - St. Joseph Catholic Church in Manistee when the Noon Mass of Christian Burial will then be celebrated with Fr. Zeljko Guberovic, celebrant.

Memorial contributions may be made in Ilene's name to:

1. Ronald McDonald House of Western Michigan
2. American Lung Association
3. Guardian Angels Church Historic Preservation Fund
4. Or to the organization of the donor's choice

Envelopes will be available at the Herbert Funeral Home.

Special thanks to Sheri Pefley, and the staff of Friends Who Care, and the patient care teams at Munson Healthcare Manistee Hospital.

Ilene's family would especially like to thank Rich Strandberg for his many years of dedication to their family.

The Herbert Funeral Home of Manistee is in charge of funeral arrangements.