

Verdilla "Dolly" Bertelsen, 97

April 13, 1911 - July 5, 2008

APPLE VALLEY, MN —

Verdilla "Dolly" Theresa Bertelsen, daughter of Edward and Magdalena (Klein) Wageman, was born on April 13, 1911, on the family farm northwest of Defiance, IA. She was baptized and confirmed at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Defiance and attended country school and St. Peter's Catholic Schools. Dolly's father loved music and taught the girls how to play musical instruments. Dolly learned to play the violin and she and her sisters played for dances in Shelby County and other adjoining counties. Their band was known as the Wageman Girls Orchestra. For the Harlan Fall Festival in 1935, they shared the stage with Ronald Reagan who was the radio announcer for KRNT and the Andrew Sisters from Des Moines. The



Wageman Girls also played for the first dance at the new Defiance Community Hall. The following week's dance featured the Lawrence Welk Orchestra. She moved to Minneapolis, MN in 1936 where she graduated from Miller Vocational College with her LPN degree. She worked at the Sheltering Arms Hospital which specialized in children with polio. While attending college, she was chosen as the "Florence Nightingale Nurse" of the year. Dolly also worked for many years as a cocktail and banquet waitress at the famous restaurant "Covered Wagon" in downtown Minneapolis. She served many politicians including Hubert Humphrey.

September 1952, Dolly married her longtime friend Harry Bertelsen. They were later divorced. Following her retirement in 1972, she joined the Kevin Belles - a women's musical comedy group from St. Kevin's Parish in south Minneapolis. She played the violin, sang, and was featured as "Hello Dolly" from the Johnny Carson show. She was part of this group for eighteen years. After a serious car accident in 1997, she moved to the Apple Valley Villa to be near her son, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. It was there that she died on Saturday, July 5, 2008 having attained the age of ninety-seven years, two months, and twenty-two days.

Dolly is preceded in death by her parents; one granddaughter Joan Wageman; and her siblings: Kathryn Sonderman, Rose McCollum; Henry Wageman; and George Wageman. She is survived by her son Jack Wageman of Apple Valley, MN; three grandchildren: Tom Wageman and his wife Lori; Jerry Wageman and his wife Marsha; and Jackie Jones; six great-grandchildren: Heather, Sarah, Jill, Jolaine, Allyson, and Jason; her sisters: Josephine Marshall of Dunlap, IA; Ann Wetherly of Apple Valley, MN; and Leona Buman of Harlan, IA; her brothers: Elmer Wageman and his wife Margaret of Defiance, IA and Edward Wageman and his wife Judy of Detroit Lakes, MN; nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.

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A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Friday, July 11, 2008 at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Defiance, IA with Rev. Tom Coenen presiding over the 10:30 AM service. Serving as casket bearers were John Foline, Don Wageman, Bill McCollum, George Sonderman, Georgene Schaben, Bob Marshall, and Norma Gross with interment held at Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery in Defiance.



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