

Rosa Lee Byrnes, 84
May 16, 1931 - March 12, 2016

HARLAN — Rosa Lee Margaret Raymond Byrnes, 84, of Harlan died peacefully on March 12, due to complications of cancer.

Rosa Lee was born May 16, 1931, to Louis and Rose Raymond of Portsmouth. Rosa Lee attended St. Mary's Catholic School in Portsmouth, eventually earning scholarships to study nursing at several schools across the country and earning her BSN from Creighton University College of Nursing in Omaha. Rosa Lee was especially proud to have served as head nurse of the St. Joseph's Hospital Polio Rehab Center.



Rosa Lee accepted Pat Byrnes's third proposal, and they married in December 1956. Together they raised seven children, and enjoyed many close friends in Harlan and the surrounding area. Her devotion to family, friends, and community was evident by her involvement in scouting, church ministries, blood bank, hospital auxiliary, and many other community organizations. Rosa Lee was the first woman to be elected to the school board of St. Michael's Parish School. She and Pat ventured to cities and countries around the world, always bringing home a new perspective that enriched the lives of those around them.

With her sister, Marian, she was active in educating others about Iowa's Orphan Train children, one of whom was their father, who was welcomed into a family in Neola, from the New York Foundling Home.

Rosa Lee offered kind words to everyone she met, and she often followed that up with a batch of her famous monster cookies or a delicious pumpkin pie. She encouraged others to be kind to each other, and to eat dessert first.

Rosa Lee exemplified her giving spirit until the end, as she requested her body be donated to Creighton University School of Medicine, in order to nurture the next generation of medical professionals.

Rosa Lee was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, John Raymond. She is survived by her husband, Pat; children Shawn Byrnes, Seattle; Sue (Tom) Broadbooks, Ankeny; Mike (Laurie) Byrnes, Harlan; Kathy (Tom) Holdefer, Mingo; Brian Byrnes, San Diego and Harlan; Patrick, Ankeny; and Carrie (Bob) Wurr, Defiance. She is also survived by her beloved sister, Marian Smith; as well as twelve grandchildren, Hunter and Aleck Byrnes; Ross and Ella Broadbooks; Jessie and Jamie Byrnes; Katrina, Tyrus, and Paul Holdefer; Naoma and Theia Byrnes; and James Shughart; and one great-grandchild, Rosalia Holdefer.

A funeral mass will tentatively be held 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 11, at St. Michael's Catholic Church. The family wishes for memorials in Rosa Lee's name to be directed to the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Shelby County.