

Rita Ohlinger, 84

Jan. 17, 1921 - Dec. 2, 2005

PORTSMOUTH — Rita Catherine Ohlinger, daughter of August F. and Mary G. Kenkel Reinig, the oldest of eleven children, was born Jan. 17, 1921, in Panama. She was baptized, received First Holy Communion, and was confirmed at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Panama. She attended school in Panama and completed third and fourth grade in one year, eventually becoming valedictorian of her class of 1938. Rita worked in an Omaha defense plant during World War II.

April 17, 1945, Rita married John H. Ohlinger. They were blessed with six daughters and four sons. After their marriage, the couple farmed near Portsmouth, until 1981, when they moved into Portsmouth. John and Rita shared 57 years of marriage. John died in 2002. Rita was active in many organizations in the church and community, including the Rosary Society, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Portsmouth coordinator for German Colony Tours for twelve years, longtime 4-H leader and judge, Shelby County Historical Society, County on Aging, and the Quilting Club. She was named Shelby County Mother of the Year in 2005 and was a 2005 Iowa Merit Mother of the Year. Rita died Dec. 2, 2005, at Elm Crest Retirement Community at age 84 years, 10 months and 16 days.

In addition to her parents and her husband, Rita was preceded in death by a son, Stephen; grandchild, Joseph; and her brothers and sister, August, Robert and Rosemary. Survivors include her children, Marilyn (Bob) Zotti of Bellevue, NE; Carolyn (Larry) Hein of Alvord; Jane (Gary) Book of Manson; Emily (Bruce) Alexander of Omaha, NE; John R. Ohlinger of Ottumwa; Richard Ohlinger (Mary) of Portsmouth; Rose (Tom) Bruck of Avoca; Alice (Lonny) Janecek of LaVista, NE; David Ohlinger (Beverly) of Portsmouth; 24 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; her brothers and sisters, Tony Reinig (Mildred) of Harlan; Joe Reinig (Arlene) of Portsmouth; Alvin Reinig (Mildred) of Harlan; Theresa (Robert) Krupicka of Council Bluffs; Mary Slaven of Portsmouth; Cecelia Tunnell of Orville, CA; Catherine Schomers of Harlan; Alfred Reinig (Betty) of Kansas City, KS; Donald Reinig (Joyce) of Hood River, OR and other relatives.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Dec. 5, 2005, at St. Mary Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Portsmouth, with Rev. John Dorton celebrant and Rev. Ben Kenkel and Rev. Paul Monahan concelebrants. Burial was in St. Mary's Cemetery in Portsmouth, with Brian Hein, Dan Kohl, Brad Hein, Scott Ryan, Tim Book, John Ryan, Rick Ohlinger, Chad Bruck, Brett Ohlinger, and Alfred Ohlinger casket bearers. Pauley Jones Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

