

**Ruth Edna Poepsel,**  
**85**

**Aug. 30, 1932 - Nov. 6, 2017**

**HARLAN** – Ruth Edna Poepsel, known as Edna to her family and friends, was born to Henry Christian and Ellen (Holtkamp) Mertens on August 30, 1932, in Houghton. She graduated from Mt. Pleasant High School in 1950, and worked at a bank in Mt. Pleasant until her marriage to James Francis Poepsel of West Point, on August 17, 1957. Jim's teaching career took them to Elk Horn and Council Bluffs. They moved to Harlan in 1967, and settled into their treasured Baldwin Street home, where Edna lived for 50 years. In 1978, Edna and Jim bought the Dairy Sweet in downtown Harlan, which Edna continued to operate for many years following Jim's death in 1980.



As a member of St. Michael's Catholic Church in Harlan, Edna's faith was deeply important to her, and she was known to regularly and earnestly pray the rosary. She was happiest when spending time with family and friends in her home. Edna also enjoyed playing Bingo, reading, and gardening.

Edna Poepsel died on Monday, November 6, 2017, at CHI Bergan Mercy Hospital in Omaha, NE. She had reached the age of 85 years, two months, and seven days.

Edna was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; daughter, Mary Poepsel; and sister, Lorraine Mertens.

Edna is survived by seven children, Patricia (Richard) Kemp of Omaha, NE, Kathryn (Matthew) Reed of Spring, TX, James (Linda) Poepsel of Houston, TX, Susan (Forrest) Westbrook of Spring, TX, Francis (Tracy McKinney) Poepsel of Council Bluffs, John Poepsel of Katy, TX, and Sara Poepsel Miller of Harlan; six siblings, Dorothy (James) McCarr of Lemont, IL, Sr. Bernice Mertens of St. Francis, WI, Joann Luttenegger of Bettendorf, Leroy Mertens of West Burlington, Mary Jean (Jack) Kasher of Omaha, NE, and William (Joyce) Mertens of Central City; eight grandchildren; and other relatives and friends.

Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, November 11, 2017, at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Harlan, with Father John Frost celebrating. Kate Kohorst and MaryAnn Murtaugh served as the musicians. Rachel Kemp, Andrew Miller, and Ava Miller served as readers. Casket bearers were John Poepsel, Richard Kemp, Matthew Reed, James Poepsel, Francis Poepsel, and Forrest Westbrook. Burial was in the Harlan Cemetery in Harlan.

The Burmeister-Johannsen Funeral Home in Harlan was in charge of the arrangements. Condolences may be left online at [www.burmeisterjohannsen.com](http://www.burmeisterjohannsen.com).

**BURMEISTER~  
JOHANNSEN**

FUNERAL HOME

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