



## Rebecca M. Kuehnel

February 6, 1933 - February 20, 2017

Rebecca (Becky) Marie Kuehnel was born Sunday, February 6, 1933 at home, with a blizzard on the way, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, to Signe Margaret (nee: Johnson) and Reuben Philip Pederson. She was preceded in death by an older sister, Marlene Toso, and is survived by younger sisters Doris Enderson and Kathryn Knudsen, and brothers Richard (Dickie) and Charles (Chuckie) Pederson.

Becky met Reno (Skip) Walter Kuehnel Jr. during Christmas break of her second year at Cottey College. They married secretly the following spring, on April 4, 1953. It wasn't until that fall that the newlyweds were able to begin living together, and then never parted until Skip passed away December 20th of 2012, just shy of their 60th anniversary.

After the birth of their third son, Reno and Rebecca began adopting. Thirteen more children would be welcomed into the family, raised with their parents' love of learning and arts, their awareness of the needs of others, and a sense of duty to a human family that crosses racial, religious, and ethnic divides. Any who met Becky can agree on this point, she was a warrior for her beliefs and a champion for her friends. Early on, she was voted Class President, both in high school and at Cottey College, and her drive to help others led her to work with the Laubach Literacy program ("Each One Teach One"), become a charter member of MCEO, a civil rights organization in Milwaukee, a leader in the Migrant Ministry program for southeastern Wisconsin, in addition to hosting international students. On the farm, she cared for thousands of calves,

and kept a 5-acre vegetable garden. Even in “retirement” she remained active, as a First Responder, a rest home Activities Aide, a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and an active participant in a variety of Church Councils and community organizations. But, perhaps the best thing that can be said about her is that she never met a stranger, and so many, even after only a single conversation, became her life-long friend.

Strong faith, boundless optimism, unwavering courage, generous spirit, and through it all, music – original songs, hymns, the chorus from a musical, lullabies – whatever the occasion, whatever the weight of the day, Becky always had a song flowing through it. For those of us who hear her voice, she will never be truly gone.

Friends and family will gather for a celebration of her life at a service to be held April 1st, 2017 at First Congregational Church, 310 Bluff Avenue, Sheboygan, WI. The gathering will start at 2:30 to share stories and memories, with the service starting at 3:00 pm, and all are welcome to stay for a meal to follow in the church hall. The family has honored Becky’s request for her body to be donated to the Medical College of Wisconsin for medical research. Memorials will be directed to organizations Becky requested on her behalf.

On behalf of her children - Chris, Peter, David, Tom, John, Maria, Sam, Tory, Jean, Maurice, Fernando, Tyrone, Ho Chang, Adriano, Roberto, Caleb – grandchildren and great-grandchildren, we would also like to give a special thanks to all the people who stepped up to care for Becky with dignity and compassion: the staff at the Odd Fellow Home in Green Bay, Dr. Luke Warpinski, caregivers Tory Haney, Pam Mraz (Sheffer), and Shelly Stockwell.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 1. 2:30 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

First Congregational Church  
310 Bluff Avenue  
Sheboygan, WI 53081

## Celebration of Life

APR 1 (CT)

First Congregational Church  
310 Bluff Avenue  
Sheboygan, WI 53081

# Tribute Wall

KH

“*Condolences too all of you. May you share beautiful memories and feel confident that she is in the arms of a loving God.*  
*Karen Hennings (Bonds)*

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**Karen Hennings** - March 05, 2017 at 07:32 PM