



## Opal Louise Bents

January 8, 1914 - May 28, 2013

Opal Louise (Wood) Bents died on Tuesday, May 28, 2013 at the Rehabilitation Center of Hampton, 700 2nd St. SE, Hampton, Iowa. Opal called Dumont, Iowa her hometown - "Small Town - Big Heart." Heaven is now her eternal home because of her choosing the grace of Christ for her salvation. Her life witnessed a dependency on God's design and purpose, and she was thankful to God for guiding her living. We will celebrate her life with friends and family on Monday, June 3. Opal was born on January 8, 1914 to Walter (1885-1972) and Emma (1886 - 1957) (Bergman) Wood at the family farm five miles west of Elmer, Missouri. She was the youngest of five children and a sister to Georgia (Kellison), Raymond, Leona (Miller), and Albert. Her education included grade school at Diamond School located one and a half miles north of the family farm and high school in Elmer with her graduating year at Edina High School in Knox County, east of Kirksville. Teachers who guided her education included Georgia and Raymond and Uncle Otha Bergman. She, like her family, valued learning opportunities and made it a priority all of her life. She would want us to remember that we are never too old to learn or use the skills we have learned. Opal loved her family, and the friendship she bonded with them continued through the generations to the children of her brothers and sisters. She would be honored as her children continue the tradition of loving her/their family. On December 21, 1939 she married William Cornelius Bents, "Bill." Together they raised three children, Margery, Billy, and Terry. Opal and Bill lived in the Parkersburg area before

moving to Dumont where their children attended grade school and graduated from Dumont High School. As her family grew up, Opal was employed for fifteen years as a school cook and "Avon Lady." Her family will always remember her achievement as an excellent cook in their home, as well as an events cook. She taught her family to start with a little pan and get a bigger one as the goodness of the cooking developed. The memory of Opal's noodles and chicken bring delight to her family's taste buds. Her hands have baked many cinnamon rolls and a variety of cookies. Rhubarb and mulberry cobbler began with the picking and gathering of the fruits. Harvesting the produce from gardens and farmers' markets was a trademark of her desire to serve wonderful tasty meals from her kitchen and places of employment. Both she and Bill were dedicated workers to provide for their family and taught their children the importance of taking personal responsibility for their livelihood. She felt privileged to see all of her children maintain successful careers and lead productive lives. In 1970, Bill passed away unexpectedly. She was 56 years old at the time and made a courageous decision to provide a good living for herself. She chose to attend and graduate from AIB college in Des Moines. After which, she gained employment with the City of Des Moines Health Department and worked until her retirement in 1979. Moving back to Dumont was her desire, and she joyfully created a home at #20 Townview Court. She loved to create beauty with her flower beds, grow crops in her garden, drive her car, entertain her grandchildren, help her children, travel by bus throughout the USA, play with family history and genealogy, attend Elderhostels, spend time with her siblings, neices, and nephews, and always find value in the items at a garage sale. Saturday nights were reserved for her to participate in worship services lead by Christian pastors like Billy Graham and Robert Schuller. The years of her retirement extended from 1979 to 2013 while she independently managed her life and resources well and taught us to make the best of what you have and share while you do it. At the age of 99, she made another courageous decision to allow new people from a care center help her live through the last four months of her life on earth. She truly

is "one tough act to follow." We are privileged to have been her family, friends, co-workers, and care-givers. Her life made a difference in all the lives she touched. Opal is best known for her work as a VOLUNTEER. First of all she had a passion for helping people. Then, she put her passion into practice by actively seeking out ways to make a difference in the lives of people in her community. Independently she offered help to people who needed rides, food, companionship, and concern. Formally, she helped establish The Dumont Meals Program in 1982 with a vision for providing nutritious meals, entertainment, fellowship, and a common meeting place for aging people in Dumont. One goal she fostered was to help homebound people stay in their homes and keep their quality of life before going to care centers. She succeeded as a devoted volunteer for thirty years, and made a difference for many people by her active participation until age 98. Opal is a testimony to the health benefits of remaining both mentally and physical active. Her legacy is one of serving others by "doing all you can while you can for as long as you can!" Remember with us the phrase that Opal was "a little cog in a big wheel." Being the Grand Marshall in the Dumont quasquicentennial birthday celebration (2004) was an honor she cherished. Working daily with the Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging gave her insight and opportunity to bridge the understandings between the needs of the people and the agency serving them. Being inducted into the (2007) Bulter County Hall of Fame was a delight she humbly accepted. Through serving as both president and member of the Butler County Council on Aging she gained a reputation for encouraging agencies to allocate concern with funding for the needs of elderly people. In 1989 (Governor Brandstad) and in 2001 (Governor Vilsack) honored her service to the people of the State of Iowa through the giving of the Governor's Volunteer Awards. In addition, receiving a Shining Star Award for Outstanding Contributions to Older Iowans from the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs was a highlight of her ninety-fifth year of life. Blending her association with the Iowa Commission for the Blind gave her tools to use to

remain independent and teach others where to reach out for help when encountering the challenge of losing eye sight. Without a doubt, Opal's gifts of time, dedication to complete the tasks, and leadership have made a difference for others. Now as we look at the events of her life it is easy to understand that she was surrounded by amazing people who highly valued Opal's life and contributions because of shared goals and ambitions. She taught us the importance of being a dependable "cog!" Opal Louise Bents is survived by her three children: daughter Margery Smith, Lisbon, CT, son Billy (Glenna), Ames, IA, and son Terry (Marilyn), Hampton, IA. Four grandchildren: Jeffrey (Analee) Smith, Lisbon, CT, Amy (Dave) Perez, Hampton, IA, Jeremy (Katie) Bents, Boone, IA, and Jessica (Curtis) Odell, Princeton, IL. Twelve great-grandchildren: Marie (Nate Jordan) Smith, Sterling, CT, Makenzie Smith, Lisbon, CT, James and Nataley Perez, Hampton, IA, Sage, Brody, Julia, Corbin, Celeste, and Glory Bents, Boone, IA, Cade and Joel Odell, Princeton, IL, and two great-grandchildren to be born in August and October of 2013. One great-great grandson: Wessun Deane Jordan, Sterling, CT. In addition, she is survived by Barbara (Donnie) Meyer, Rockwell, Darlene Sullivan, Independence, MO, Janet Pletscher, Donnelson, Joy Weber, Quincy, IL, Cheryl Mock, IL, Paula (Curtis) Rother, Des Moines, Carol (Billy) Salsberry, Queen City, MO, April (Keven) Swenson, Rockwell, Carol Aldinger and Marge Durrand, Dumont, Marva Cernuto, Shelby Twp., MI, Mark (JoAnne) Kellison, Hampton, Scott (Mary) Meyer, Dougherty, Richard (Darlene) Mason, Chapin, Harlan "Walt" (Lois) Bergman, Cedar Rapids, Pat Barlow, San Lues Obispo, CA, Eula Beach, Ft. Madison, Merlyn (Rosaly) Divens, Vancouver, WA, Pam Saba, Pine, CO, and Ahlerich Wilhelm Bents, KreisLeer, Germany. Children and siblings of the above listed relatives survives. Jean Morris, Bristow and Darlene Wagoner, Des Moines are only two of the many friends dear to Opal's heart. Surviving friends (and family) from near and far will have the opportunity to celebrate Opal's life through a visitation and memorial service on Monday, June 3. We thank you for your fellowship and friendship with Opal as each of us honor the moments of her life she shared with us. Relatives

preceding Opal's death include: Husband, "Bill" William Cornelius Bents (1970), Son-in-Law, Gene Smith (2001), Grandparents: Israel and Nancy Wood and Charles and Louisa Bergman; Parents: Walter A. Wood (1972) and Emma Belle Bergman Wood (1957); In-law parents: Wilhelm Henrich Bents (1934) and Hilke Gocken Bents (1937); Wood Siblings: Raymond Wood, Leona Miller, Georgia Kellison, and Albert Wood; Bents In-Law Siblings: Anna Gruis (1962), Cornelius (1918), Ernest (1963), Harm (1963), Remmer (1911) Bents, Katherine Norman (1989), Dorothy Ubben Stackhouse (1999), Nancy Finkle (1998), Harry Bents (1980) and Helen Mason (1997). In lieu of floral tributes Memorial gifts in memory of Opal Bents may be directed to the New Hope Parish of the United Methodist Church at 706 Locust Street, PO Box 308, Dumont, IA, 50625-0308. Even though Opal loved flowers, in her gifting for memorials she chose to give Bibles through the Gideons. Now as she leaves us, she wishes for any monetary gifts to be presented to the Church that provides a guiding light for Christ in the Dumont Community. May God bless you and yours as you continue to walk your journey with God.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Opal Louise Bents*

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**Glenna Bents** - June 08, 2013 at 10:31 AM