



Clara R. Van Kley

May 27, 1932 - December 5, 2024

Clara Ruth Van Kley, 92, of Vancouver, Washington, died on Thursday, December 5, 2024, surrounded by her family. Ruth was born to Clara and Elliot Jansma on May 27, 1932, at Hartsdale, Indiana—one of fourteen children. Her parents were farmers, initially, but after a devastating fire burned the barn to the ground, her father went to work in nearby Hammond, Indiana, in order to support the large family. One of just five daughters, Ruth was expected to assist her mother in running the household. While she embraced that role, she regretted not being able to finish her high school education. In her adult life, Ruth's birth family continued to be of great importance to her. She maintained relationships with all of her siblings and took care of her mother during her last years. Ruth was married in 1951 to Edward Van Kley, Jr. She and Edward became the parents of four sons, David Allen, Marc William, Byron Edward, and Wesley John. Ruth was a person of great faith and tenacity. She saw raising her children as her divine calling, privilege, and responsibility. Over the years, she lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bellflower, California, and Lansing, Illinois. After her divorce, she cleaned homes and offices to support her family. In whatever spare time she had, she enjoyed serving others through her church and volunteering for years at her local thrift store. Later, she welcomed into the world fourteen grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren, each of whom was "the apple of her eye." In Ruth's own words, "I love them all." She never missed a birthday. You always could count on her for a batch of chocolate chip cookies, a warm hug, and plenty of

grandmotherly advice! More than fifteen years ago, Ruth moved to the northwest, living first with her son, Byron, and family, and then independently before spending the last eight years of her life at Prestige Bridgewood, where she made many friends and thoroughly enjoyed being part of the community. She especially loved to work jigsaw puzzles with her friends and excelled at beanbag baseball! All who knew Ruth will miss her dearly. We commend her in confidence to the Lord in whom she placed her trust. Clara Ruth Van Kley was preceded in death by her parents and by her siblings, Richard, William, Elliot, Jr., Tillie, Grace, Cora, Michael, Peter, Joyce, Donald, and James. She is survived by two brothers, Arthur and Carl, and by her children, David (Arlene) Van Kley, of Gwinn, Michigan; Marc (Cheryl) Van Kley, of Stockbridge, Georgia; Byron (Traci) Van Kley, of Vancouver, Washington; and Wesley Van Kley, of Asheville, North Carolina. She is survived by her grandchildren, Emily, Nicholas, Constance, Christopher, Daniel, Joshua, Jacob, Hannah, Sara, Abigail, Carson, Nathan, Shane, and Baylie and by her great grandchildren, Rudy, Abraham, Sydney, Ida, Eva, Ellie, Esther, Bridget, Luca, Emmett, Harrison, and Nico. She is also survived by many nieces and nephews. A memorial for Clara Ruth Van Kley will be held at 1 PM, on Monday, December 30, at Columbia Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, with the Rev. Scott Peterson officiating. A visitation will precede the service, beginning at 12 noon. Burial will take place on May 27, 2025, at the Oak Ridge Cemetery in Lansing, Illinois.

Tribute Wall

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“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory

A Memorial Tree was planted for Clara R. Van Kley - December 09, 2024 at 12:00 AM