

# Overleden

## /obituaries

### Ruth L. Blommers

Ruth L. Blommers, 77, of Coralville, Iowa, passed away on Tuesday, January 24, 2012, in Mercy Iowa City Hospice after a six month battle with cancer. Services were held at Murdoch-Linwood Funeral Home & Cremation Service in Cedar Rapids on Monday, January 30, 2012, by Pastor Steve Rachke.

Burial will be at Oak Wood Cemetery, Pella, Iowa, at a later date.

Ruth was born to Walter and Ruby Riddle on July 24, 1934, in Dallas, Iowa. She lived most of her teenage and young adult years in Pella, Iowa. On September 7, 1957, she married Gysbert Blommers at the Little Brown Church in Nashua. Shortly thereafter the newly wedded couple moved to Marion. They had two daughters, Joni and Susan. Ruth worked at Rockwell Collins for 35 years.

After retiring Ruth and Guy enjoyed spending their winters in Texas and Florida. They also enjoyed traveling throughout the U.S. Other than spending time with her family, Ruth's favorite thing to do was to walk and sit along the beach in Indian Shores, Florida.

In 2001, Ruth and Guy moved to Coralville to be closer to her family. During that time Ruth became a member of the University of Iowa Women's Club and several bible study groups. She enjoyed a variety of activities sponsored by the Rockwell Retirement Group, Farmers State Bank, Hills Bank and Trust Senior's Club and the Coralville Rec Center senior's group. She volunteered at Mercy Iowa City and for RSVP with the grade school "Rocking Readers" and "Pen Pal" programs. One of her greatest rewards was volunteering with the children, staff and parents at Heritage Christian School in North Liberty. She was an avid walker and reader.

Ruth was a gentle spirit with a kind heart. She was a woman of great faith who always put others before herself. Ruth was a longtime member of the First Presbyterian Church in Marion and then attended Parkview Evangelical Church in Iowa City after moving to Coralville. She never met a stranger and loved to visit with friends and family as often as possible.

Survivors include her daughter and son-in-law, Joni and Gary Werle, Iowa City; grandchildren, Erica and Andrew Rohret, Oxford; son-in-law, Scott Rohret, Oxford; brother, Norman (Maribelle) Riddle, Pella; and sisters: Doris (Jim) Sparks, Newton, Lee Haley, Des Moines; Etta Mae "Skip" (Louis) Hansen, Silver Spring, Missouri; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Preceding Ruth in death were her parents; husband, Gysbert; daughter, Susan Rohret; and siblings, Leroy Riddle and Leta Johnson.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Heritage Christian School Foundation or Mercy Iowa City Foundation.

The family would like to thank the compassionate medical teams at both Cancer Care of Iowa City and Mercy Iowa City for their personal attention and loving care they provided

Ruth during her illness.

Please sign the online guest book for Ruth at [www.murdochfuneral-home.com](http://www.murdochfuneral-home.com) under obituaries.

### Frances Van Haaften

Frances Vande Lune was born on December 16, 1920, near Leighton, Iowa. She was the fourth of eight children that were born to William and Lena (Vander Wiel) Vande Lune.

Fran began her grade education near Leighton and graduated from the 8th grade at Prairie City, Iowa. As a young girl she made her home with her parents and started working at the Rolscreen Company in Pella, Iowa on April 25, 1949. Her father passed away in January, 1956, and following his death, Fran continued to care for her mother until her death in November, 1974.

On October 17, 1975, she was united in marriage with Ernest John Van Haaften, a son of the late John A. and Minnie (Van Gorp) Van Haaften. Following their wedding, Fran and "Ernie", newlyweds, were greeted with a then popular shivaree.

Ernie passed away suddenly on September 1, 1976, at the age of 59 years leaving her with four stepchildren: Nella Veenstra, John E. Van Haaften, and twins, Ruth J. and Ronald J. Van Haaften.

Following his death, Fran continued to be a part of the Rolscreen Company success for 42 years. She had began working in the venetian blind area and then on the moulders and as a sash nailer. At the time of her retirement in March, 1991, she was one of the more senior members of the architectural plant works in the muntin bar department. Fran was recognized for having 31 years of perfect attendance and dedicated service to the Rolscreen Company and in February, 1989, was recognized by the then Iowa Governor Terry Branstad as a "Treasure of Iowa". She and her younger sister, Shurley Schutte, did cleaning at Vermeer Manufacturing Company and Fran remained a very active person.

She enjoyed flea markets, antiques and traveling. She collected dolls and clocks and had the opportunity over the years to visit such places as Hawaii, Europe, New Zealand and Australia. Fran enjoyed talking on the telephone daily, gardening and taking care of her yard. She will long be remembered for her leaf raking "technique".

On Tuesday morning, January 24, 2012, Fran passed away at her residence in Pella, where she had lived since 1963, at the age of 91 years.

She is survived by three stepchildren: Nella Veenstra, Ruth Bushnell and Ronald Van Haaften; and will be dearly missed by her brother and his wife, Marvin and Mary Lou Vande Lune, her sister and her husband, Shirley and Joe Schutte, another sister-in-law, Esther (Leonard) Vande Lune all of Pella; and her special nieces and nephews. Fran was preceded in death by her husband, Ernest Van Haaften; a stepson, John E. Van Haaften; her parents, William and Lena Vande Lune; a brother who died in infancy in 1929, two sisters and their husbands: Gertrude and Gert Van Dyke, Ruth and M. Merle Kallemyn, and two brothers and their

wives: Wilbert G. and Genevieve Vande Lune, and Leonard R. and Janella Vande Lune.

Fran loved to listen to Christian music. She was a lifelong member of the First Christian Reformed Church in Pella and was a faithful listener to their radio ministry broadcast. "Auntie Fran" was loved by her special nieces and nephews and will be truly missed by her family and many friends.

Funeral services were held on Friday, January 27, 2012 at the First Christian Reformed Church in Pella. Arrangements were handled by Van Dyk - Duven Funeral Home.

### Gertrude Van Den Heuvel

Gertrude Van Den Heuvel, 96, of Oskaloosa and formerly of rural New Sharon, died Thursday, January 26, 2012, at the Oskaloosa Care Center in Oskaloosa.

She was born August 14, 1915, at Otley, Iowa, the daughter of Garrett and Alleta Verros Uitermark. Early on she went to work cleaning homes and later worked for Tucker's Grocery store in Harvey. On September 1, 1936, she was united in marriage to Henry Van Den Heuvel at Pella; he died September 22, 1995. Following their marriage, she stayed home to care for her family. After her children were raised she went to work at Younkers in Oskaloosa.

Lastly she worked for Kids Carousel in Oskaloosa for many years. She also volunteered at the Mahaska Hospital Auxiliary Snack Bar. She was a member of the First Christian Reformed Church in Oskaloosa where she was involved with Ladies Aide. She was also active in Neighborhood Club, and the Hospital Auxiliary. She enjoyed playing Rook, trips to Branson, going to Kalona for meals, and coffee time with her friends. She was very talented at doing ceramics, she won many awards with her handiwork. She also made porcelain dolls for all of her granddaughters. She delighted in spending time with her family.

She is survived by her three sons: Jaren (& Linda) Van Den Heuvel of Oakton, Virginia; Larkin Van Den Heuvel of Ottumwa; and Hollis (& Ann) Van Den Heuvel of What Cheer; 7 grandchildren: Howard (Marian) Van Den Heuvel, Heather (Bradford) Fuller, Thomas (Laurie) Van Den Heuvel, Ryan (Keri) Van Den Heuvel, and Corey (Lyndsay) Van Den Heuvel, Jeannie Van Den Heuvel, and Holly (Adam) Brink; 12 great-grandchildren; two sisters: Leona Vermeer of Pella and Julia Kamenick of Pella.

In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents; two brothers: Floyd Uitermark and Matt Uitermark; two sisters: Dorothy Van Essen and Harriett DePenning. Funeral services were held Saturday, January 28, 2012, in the First Christian Reformed Church in Oskaloosa. Reverend Dale Visser officiated. Private family burial took place at Oakwood Cemetery in Pella prior to the funeral ceremony. The Bates Funeral Chapel was in charge of the arrangements.

Memorials may be made to the Ladies Bible Hour at the First Christian Reformed Church.

### Conrad De Vries

Conrad De Vries was born on January 6, 1908, near Pella, Iowa. He was the sixth child born to Syburn and Jacoba (Stouwie) De Vries and grew up on farms in the Pella area. Conrad attended the Pella Christian Grade School in Pella where he graduated from the 8th grade.

"Con" as he was known, was a hired hand on the farm until his early 20s when he met Anna Andringa. He often brought her home by horse and buggy and on February 2, 1930, they were married at a church service at the Protestant Reformed Church. Con and Anna were blessed with two children, Vernon Doyle and Beulah Pearl.

They farmed in the Peoria and Pella area for 22 years and in 1952 made a fresh start when they bought a little home in Pella. Although always a farmer at heart, Con found employment at Wormhoudt Furniture Store. Later he decided to do maintenance and janitorial work, first for the Pella Community Hospital and Lincoln School, and then Central College. The Strawtown Inn in Pella was the last place he was hired to do maintenance work for Bob Klein until the 80s when he retired. His retirement years were spent upholstering furniture and being useful on the farm with his grandchildren. He enjoyed taking them fishing in the summer and hunting in the winter.

In 1990 he and Anna moved from their home on Hazel Street to Prairie Village where they were blessed with ten more years together, the last three of which he lovingly cared for her. God took her to her heavenly home on February 11, 2000 after 70 years of marriage.

In July 2007 Con became a resident in the Long Term Care Unit at the Pella Regional Health Center. He blessed those around him through sharing his faith and singing Dutch Psalms. While his eyesight had diminished, his memory of the Psalms and hymns remained strong. On Monday evening January 23, 2012 at the astounding age of 104 years the Lord called him to his Heavenly home.

Con was truly a blessing to his entire family. He will be remembered for his patience, kind spirit and loving heart. His grandchildren especially remember him singing Psalms at their wedding receptions.

He will be dearly missed by his family and many others who knew him.

Those left to cherish his memory are Beulah P. and Loren De Zwarte of Pella; Lila and Larry Gullion of Knoxville; Darrell and Rhonda De Zwarte of Pella; Larry and Janice De Zwarte of Knoxville; Sheila and Jim Van Donselaar of Grand Rapids, MI; Lisa and Kevin Rowe of Grand Rapids, MI; Tresa and Tim Koole of Grand Rapids, MI; Lonnie and Danece De Zwarte of Pella; Angela and Brian Tenbrock of Grand Rapids, MI; Pamela and Mike Cleary of Grand Rapids, MI; Marilyn J. (Vernon) De Vries of Pella; Michael and Dawn De Vries of Kalamazoo,

MI; David and Laurel De Vries of Knoxville; Carla and Will Bennett of Phoenix, AZ; Ruth Kuiper of Knoxville and Thomas and Jill De Vries of Pella.

The Lord not only blessed Con and Anna with 2 children, but also 16 grandchildren, 63 great-grandchildren and 34 great-great-grandchildren. Of his original family he leaves one sister, Dorothy (Cecil) De Vries of Pella.

Con was preceded in death by his wife, Anna; his son, Vernon; two grandchildren, Leann and Anthony De Zwarte; a great-great-grandchild, Sara Lunsford; his parents, Syburn and Jacoba De Vries; and the following sisters and brothers: Minnie (Gysbert) Ryken, Anna (Syburn) Vortman, Tena (Henry) Stursma, Jacob De Vries and Wiebe De Vries.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, January 28, 2012 at the Covenant Reformed Church in Pella. Arrangements were handled by Van Dyk - Duven Funeral Home.

### Norma Gaass

Norma Lucille was born in rural Wayne County, Iowa on November 14, 1921, the second daughter of

Bertha Ione Winger Goodell and Clarence William Goodell. She graduated from Cambria High School at Cambria, Iowa in 1938. After graduation, the family moved to Pella, Iowa to allow their daughters, Geraldine and Norma, to attend Central College, where they had been awarded scholarships. Clarence & Ione ran the West End Café & gas station, which became a popular hangout for young people. Norma, pretty & outgoing, was an attendant on the Central College Homecoming court and was active in a womens' society at Central where she majored in History. While at Central, she met Peter George Gaass, a Pella native, whose ancestors founded Pella. His mother, Elizabeth H. (Bess) Scholte Gaass was the first child born to Henry Peter and Leonora Keables Scholte. Henry P. Scholte was the son of Dominie Hendrik Pieter and Mareah Scholte, who were leaders of the Dutch colonists who had founded Pella, Iowa in 1847.

After graduation, Norma taught at Colfax High School in Colfax, Iowa and Pete entered the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. They were married on March 19, 1943, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Norma supported Pete in his military career, moving with him to Air Force bases across the country until he was sent to fight in the South Pacific. Norma moved back to Pella in 1944 for the birth of their first child. After the end of the war, Pete returned to Pella where he practiced law with his father, George Gerard Gaass, in the Gaass & Gaass Law Firm which later became Gaass, Klyn & Boehlje. Pete continued to practice law until shortly before his death on May 6, 2002 at the age of 84 years.

Norma & Pete established a happy and active home, welcoming four children: Pamela Kay, Janis Norine, Karen Ilene and David Peter. Norma was active in Second Reformed Church, P. E. O. Chapter BU, TTT Chapter AE and served on the Pella

Community Center Board. She volunteered as a greeter in the Windmill in Central Park, helped decorate the Historical Village at Christmas and was involved in numerous other community activities. She and Pete spent many winters in Florida, where they loved beach walking. She was a warm and loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother who remained active until illness dictated a new lifestyle. Norma lived at Vriendschaap Village for several years after Pete's death, where she was a friend to all.

Norma was also a tremendously active and dedicated supporter of Central College and the Pella Tulip Festival. She worked each year to insure that all family members could have Dutch costumes. Her contributions of time and effort to the Scholte House were significant. Other Tulip Time contributions included helping to dress the dolls in the Historical Village display, participating in the Parade of Provinces on stage, riding on the Provinces Float, working on the Queen's Court costume committee and conceptualizing and organizing the "Village Costumes" float. Because of these many contributions and her years of work, Norma was honored by the City of Pella as its 2010 annual Tulip Time Service Award winner.

In 2008, Norma established the Peter G. & Norma L. Gaass Endowed Scholarship at Central, endowing as well, the Presidential Suite on the campus. She was a dedicated fan of Central College football, regularly attending both home and away games for many years.

Early Monday morning, January 23, 2012, Norma passed away peacefully in the Long Term Care Unit at the Pella Regional Health Center having just recently observed her 90th birthday. She leaves to mourn her passing her children: Janis (James) Patton of Phoenix, Arizona; Karen Gaass of Denver, Colorado, and David (Dawn) Gaass of Denver; her son-in-law, Kenneth Robus of Eddyville, Iowa; her adored 10 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren: Susan (Douglas) Winegardner and four children, of Pleasant Hill, Iowa; Deborah (Jay) Sunderman and three children of Pella; Richard Robus and two children of Waukee, Iowa; Jill (Chad) Monson and three children, of Phoenix; Benjamin (Melanie) Patton and three children, of Phoenix; Sarah Reynolds and daughter, of Denver; Nicholas Jennings of Denver; Alexandria, Jesse and Gabrielle Gaass of Denver. Norma will also be missed greatly by her three nieces and a nephew: Artis Reis (Mark Smith), Martie Van Roekel (Greg Babler), Bill (Jan) Van Roekel and Ruth (Dave) Bowman. She was preceded in death by her husband, Peter G. Gaass; her daughter, Pamela K. Robus; her parents, Clarence and Ione Goodell; her sister & brother-in-law, Geraldine & John Van Roekel; her parents-in-law, George G. and Bess (Scholte) Gaass; and her sister-in-law, Leonora G. (Gaass) Van Dellen Hettinga.

Services were held on Saturday, January 28, 2012 at the Second Reformed Church in Pella. Arrangements were handled by Van Dyk - Duven Funeral Home.