

In loving memory of



RUTH KETELSEN MCLARNAN

FEBRUARY 19, 1919 - AUGUST 16, 2025





Ruth Ketelsen McLarnan

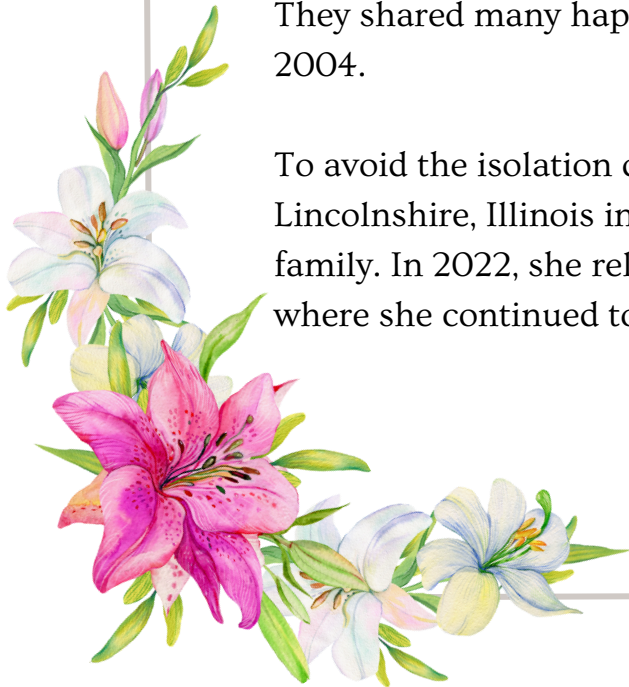
Ruth Ketelsen McLarnan, 106, of Sioux City, Iowa, passed away peacefully on August 16, 2025.

Ruth was born February 19, 1919, in Lake Park, Iowa, to Julia and Wilford Marks. She grew up on the family farm surrounded by her loving parents and siblings Warren Marks, Morris Marks, Edith Widstrom, and Dana Marks.

Ruth graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in Home Economics Education in 1941. During her time at Iowa State, she met Darrel Ketelsen, who was completing his degree in Electrical Engineering while working for the Navy. They were engaged under the clock tower at Iowa State, and married in 1942. They welcomed their daughter Fran in 1944 and their son Mark in 1946. In 1947, they moved to Le Mars, Iowa. In 1965, Ruth and Darrel moved to Sioux City. Darrel passed away in 1982.

In 1987, Ruth remarried, joining her life with Mark McLarnan. They shared many happy years together until his passing in 2004.

To avoid the isolation due to COVID, Ruth moved to Lincolnshire, Illinois in 2020 to live with her son Mark and his family. In 2022, she relocated to a nearby retirement community, where she continued to enjoy the companionship of others.





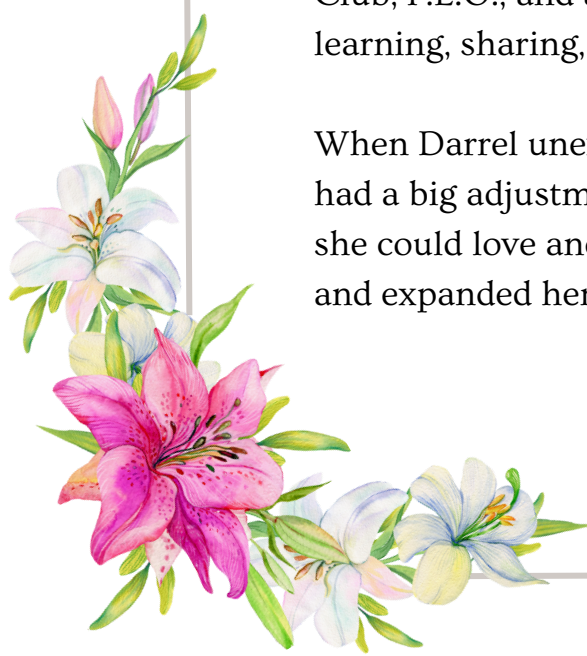
Ruth Ketelsen McLarnan

Ruth was an active, outgoing person. She made time to pursue outside interests and participate in the community. She had boundless energy and a joy for life. She could pay attention, see implications, recognize opportunities. She took notice of other people, understood their challenges, recognized their contributions, and appreciated them.

While in Le Mars, she was active in leading cub scout and brownie scout groups. She helped with home economics in a 4-H club for 6 years. Once in Sioux City, she once again extended herself to participate in the community, form friendships and pursue favorite activities, as she said, “2B’s and 2G’s” (bridge, books, golf, and gardening).

She tackled everything with verve and enthusiasm. Relationships with friends and family were the heart of Ruth’s life. She was a consummate hostess and delighted in entertaining people in her home. She was a voracious reader, regularly devouring multiple books weekly. She was an active member of the Travelers’ Book Club, P.E.O., and a local antique club, where she enjoyed learning, sharing, and spending time with friends.

When Darrel unexpectedly died in 1982 after a short illness, she had a big adjustment to make, but she also found another man she could love and marry. In 1987 she married Mark McLarnan and expanded her family and her world.





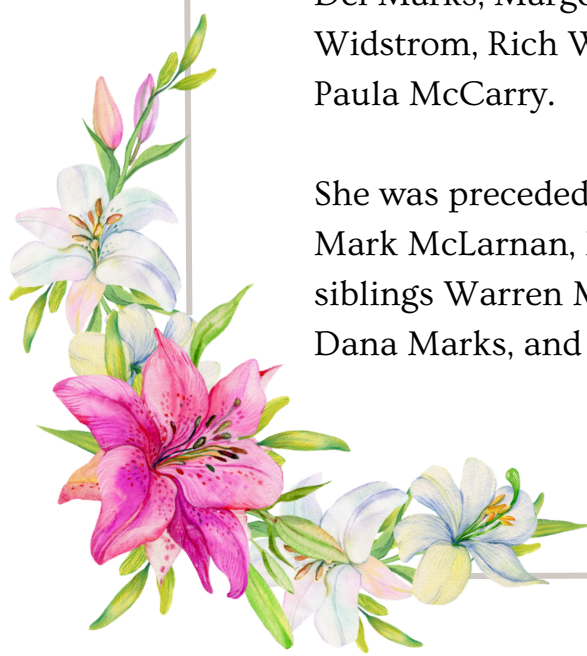
Ruth Ketelsen McLarnan

Widowed again in 2004, she found a comfortable home in an independent living community, enabling her to continue her outside activities and friendships.

When Ruth was in her 90's she continued to walk to the local grade school to read to young students. As a centenarian living in Illinois, she enjoyed daily walks, playing cards, listening to books, and engaging socially. She could be found shoveling the sidewalks after it snowed.

Ruth is survived by her children, Fran (Jim) Falender and Mark (Kathryn Hayley) Ketelsen; grandchildren Corinne (Monty) Blankenship, Loren Ketelsen, and Leigh Ketelsen; and great-grandchildren Sawyer Blankenship and Julia Blankenship, her stepdaughter, J. Kaye (Allan) Byers; daughter-in-law Carolyn McLarnan (wife of her late stepson, Keith McLarnan); step-grandchildren Mark (Susie) Byers, Paula (Chip) Vollers, and Rebecca (Jeff) Cavarra; and seven step-great-grandchildren. Ruth is lovingly remembered by her nine nieces and nephews: Del Marks, Margo Hofland, Terry Marks, Dana Widstrom, Ruth Widstrom, Rich Widstrom, Tim Reasoner, Charles Reasoner, and Paula McCarry.

She was preceded in death by her husbands Darrel Ketelsen and Mark McLarnan, her parents Julia and Wilfred Marks, and her siblings Warren Marks, Morris Marks, Edith Widstrom, and Dana Marks, and her stepson Keith McLarnan.





Ruth Ketelsen McLarnan

Ruth will be remembered for her warmth, resilience, and the remarkable perspective she carried from living more than a century. Her life was a testament to love, family, and strength, and her memory will continue to inspire all who knew her.

A service to celebrate Ruth's life will be held at First United Methodist Church, 1915 Nebraska Street, Sioux City, Iowa, on Saturday, September 6, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. Following the service, refreshments will be served at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be directed to:

- The First United Methodist Church of Sioux City
 - Address: First United Methodist Church, 1915 Nebraska Street, Sioux City, Iowa 51104.
 - Online donations: <http://siouxcityfirst.com/845273>
 - A P.E.O. scholarship fund for women whose education was interrupted
 - Address: P.E.O Executive Office, Treasurer's Department, 3700 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312. Please make checks payable to P.E.O. Program for Continuing Education.
 - Online donations to P.E.O. Program for Continuing Education can be made at:
<https://peo-portal.com/donations?step=0>
 - A charity of your choice
- 