



Mae Opal (nee Buchanan) Helmer

05/15/1937 - 04/03/2024

Mae Opal (nee Buchanan) Helmer, 86, died peacefully on Wed. April 3, 2024, at Bethel Home in Oshkosh after a lengthy bout with cancer. Born May 15, 1937, Mae was a Mother's Day present to Walter E. and Irene E. (nee Parks) Buchanan at Mercy Medical Center in Oshkosh, WI. She was baptized at First Congregationalist Church in Rosendale, WI.

Moving frequently throughout many Winnebago and Fond du Lac rural communities, Mae and her family settled on a farm that became known as White Cedars near the outskirts of Winneconne, WI. In her younger days, she participated in

4-H with the Poygan Go-Getters, maintaining a long-time friendship with Sharon Hebert. During high school, Mae was a member of Future Homemakers of America, Forensics, Chorus, and Future Teachers of America, graduating from Winneconne High School in 1955.

Mae achieved a Rural Education degree from UW-Oshkosh, where she was a member of the Alpha Chi Sorority. She married Robert L. Helmer on May 25, 1957, at First United Presbyterian Church in Winneconne. Mae traveled throughout the United States and Japan during Robert's 20-year career in the U.S. Air Force.

Mae brought five children into the world. The entire family of seven earned the coveted 100% All Scouting Family award. Mae served in the Daniel Webster Council (New Hampshire), Jayhawk Area Council (Kansas) and the Bay Lakes Council (Wisconsin). She worked as a Den Mother, Den Leader coach, Pow-Wow staff member and conductor of several training sessions for other Scout leaders. She earned the District Award of Merit (El Llano Grande District in Conquistador Council, New Mexico).

In 1976, the family retired back in her home state of Wisconsin where Mae pursued her many hobbies: crocheting, needlepoint, counted cross stitch and Bingo. Mae worked with her parents to develop a farm produce business called The Buchel Basket. She combined her love of crafts and crocheting with the selling of vegetables at area Farm Markets. Mae and her daughter Nancy Skifstad created a small business called Mae's Magnets & More. She donated many of her craft creations and became known for her love of crocheting with several gifted afghans, scrubbies and dishcloths.

One of Mae's joys was spending time with her families. She is survived by her daughters Nancy J. Skifstad and Kerrilyn S. Rodriguez; her sons Robert J. Helmer and Kenneth L. (Lisa) Helmer; and daughter-in law Cindy Kramlich Helmer. Mae has five grandchildren: Samantha R. Helmer (Zach Allard), Steven A. Davie, Wesley T. (Tanya) Reif, Brandon J. Helmer, Alita L.M. Rodriguez; four great-grandchildren: Violet and Shawn Allard, Violet and

Azalea Reif. Mae is also survived by her brothers Carl Buchanan Sr. (Joanne Hoaglum), Clark (Carla) Buchanan Sr., Richard Buchanan, Roland Buchanan, and Kirk (Kimberly) Buchanan; her sisters-in-law Betty Buchanan and Tammy Buchanan. She has many nieces, nephews and cousins amongst her surviving families.

Mae was preceded in death by her parents Walter E. and Irene E. (Parks) Buchanan; her sister and brother-in-law Merry and Ronald Koerner; her brothers Warren Buchanan, Charles R. Buchanan II; and three infant brothers; former husband Robert; her much-beloved middle child, James L. Helmer (a proud Eagle Scout) will be meeting her as she arrives in heaven to further their scouting adventures.

A visitation for family and friends will be on Thursday, April 11, 2024, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Mueller Funeral Home 904 E. Main St. Winneconne. A funeral service will be held on Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at the funeral home with Chaplain Kelly Leary officiating. Burial will be in the Omro Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial will be established.

Please visit [muellerfh.net](https://www.muellerfh.net/) to share condolences/memories with the family.

A special family thank you goes out to the nurses and staff of Bethel Home-Oshkosh, Preceptor Hospice and ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah for their love, attention and care of Mae during her final days.