



## Wilma Pitsenbarger Wolicki

October 18, 1928 - May 16, 2017

Wilma Wolicki went home to be with her Lord and Savior on May 16, 2017. She will be reunited with her husband of 57 years, who went on ahead in 2011.

She was born on a small farm on Dickenson Mountain, near Franklin, West Virginia, on October 18, 1928. She was the youngest of six children, hence earning the lifelong nickname, "Tot."

From an early age, she was an enthusiastic learner and reader. When she reached Franklin High School, she was thrilled to see there was an entire one-room library filled with books! She was a life-long learner, going to college while her own children were also going to college, receiving a B.A. from George Mason University in 1981. She was a fastidious speller and a grammar fanatic, which served her and her children well. She thought well, spoke well, wrote well. She learned Spanish in her retirement with the same enthusiasm as with her previous studies.

She was salt of the earth and a diamond in the rough, becoming more polished with every passing year. She learned the time-honored and mostly lost skills of self-sufficiency, including sewing, knitting, crocheting, canning, and cooking, and brought them to her marriage and family. From her mother she learned a "pinch of this," "a dollop of that," then applied her creative energies and branched out into nourishing and delicious adventures in international cuisine.

She was a baptized Christian and became Catholic as a young adult. She met

her husband, Eligius, in Washington, D.C. and they began their life in Christ. In her own quiet way, her faith imbued her life with peace and strength. She brought this to her family and household in words and deeds. Her faith buoyed her in the loss of her husband, in her own final days, and lives on in her offspring.

She and her husband were "old school" -- Dad the breadwinner, Mom the homemaker. She loved, was in love with, and wholly dedicated to her husband till death parted them. Her vocation and her joy was her family. She praised and supported all efforts, great and small, while humbly downplaying her role and her own accomplishments. Four successful children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren are her legacy to the future.

She was bitten early by the travel bug. At age 19, she left West Virginia for opportunities in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. On her honeymoon, she and Eligius visited national parks and retraced their steps again two years later with small child and mother-in-law in tow. This trip was repeated with the whole family 15 years later, putting on 10, 000 miles in six weeks of camping, touring most of the great national parks. From this point, the wide world was her destination. She and her husband traveled to Japan, China twice, Egypt, Australia, Papua New Guinea (for six weeks!), Southeast Asia, Russia, Europe, Mexico, Alaska, South America, and, finally, the Galapagos Islands, where she was enchanted by the extraordinary variety of nature. Wilma was a keen student of anthropology and the more primitive the destination, the more interested she was. She and Dad were the ultimate efficient travelers, more than once going abroad for two and three weeks at a time with no more than a carry-on bag. Intrepid sums her up. She was a true patriot, though, and always came back with a greater appreciation for her own country after traveling afar.

She discovered tennis in Virginia, as a social and athletic outlet. She was no golf "widow," but the children did joke about being "tennis orphans." She and Eligius loved playing the game and did it well together. In the most unassuming and understated style, they were a formidable and successful

doubles team.

Wilma was a pillar of her family and of her community. Perennially involved in the children's school and especially band activities, she was also a docent at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, sat on the Southeast Fairfax County Beautification committee, was a member of the Villamay Garden club and the Mount Vernon House and Garden Club, and was a longtime volunteer with the Knights of Columbus, the crisis pregnancy center, MaRiH, and the Inova Mount Vernon Hospital – a position she cherished for more than 20 years. She was a good neighbor, good worker, good friend.

Wilma was preceded in death by her parents, Jesse Albert Pitsenbarger, and Lena Jane Dickenson Pitsenbarger, and by her brothers, Everett, Ray, Bruce, and Benny Pitsenbarger, and her sister, Mary Pitsenbarger Starr. She is survived by her son, Karol (Valerie) Wolicki, daughters, Ann Wolicki Render (Bill), Stasia Wolicki Rhoads (Patrick), Stefanie Wolicki Jarrell (Scott). Also, grandchildren, Caitrin Rhoads Bennett (Chris), Matthew Rhoads, Patrick Rhoads, Kadja Wolicki Hutchinson (Edward) and Thaddeus Wolicki. Lastly, two great-grandchildren.

Heaven is richer for having her, while we who remain mourn her passing and await our joyful reunion with her.

In lieu of flowers, we are asking that you help honor our mother with an unconventional request that can be found here: <http://gofundme.com/in-honor-of-wilma-wolicki/>

Donations may also be made to KOVAR Foundation, c/o Knights of Columbus #5998, 8592 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22309, to support citizens with mental retardation.

Visitation will be at 10:00 a.m., June 5, 2017, at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mount Vernon Highway, Alexandria, Virginia 22309. Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 a.m. Reception to follow in the church hall.



# Tribute Wall



“ *Wilma Pitsenbarger Wolicki*

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October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Obituary Wall*



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**Jefferson Funeral Chapel** - January 28, 2019 at 09:41 AM