



## Ruth Ann Rutledge

March 22, 1928 - May 9, 2026

Ruth Ann Rutledge, 98, of Cape Girardeau passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at the Chateau Girardeau.

She was born March 22, 1928, in Taos, Missouri, to Peter and Clara Schlueter Lootens, the youngest of seven children. Ruth was a graduate of St. Francis Xavier High School, where she was salutatorian of a graduating class. She loved telling stories about growing up in the close-knit German Catholic community of Taos in the 1930s and 1940s: adventures with her siblings and extended family, mischievous fun with friends, and the steady presence of the nuns who helped shape her faith and character.

On June 26, 1954, she married Harley D. Rutledge in Taos, Missouri, beginning a loving partnership that lasted more than fifty years until his passing in 2006. Together they raised five children and built a life grounded in learning, humor, and the Catholic faith. Ruth was Harley's steady counterpart in parenting, business, bridge games, and the many gatherings they hosted for the Physics Department at Southeast Missouri State University. While Harley brought the professor's imagination and intellectual curiosity, Ruth brought warmth, practicality, common sense, and a gift for keeping family life running smoothly.

Ruth Ann was literally a stay-at-home mom until she learned to drive at 44

years old. In truth, she was the heart of the household - faithfully managing a busy home while Harley taught, conducted research, and wrote his book. She somehow managed to get five children dressed, fed, off to school each morning, and to church every Sunday, all while creating a home filled with laughter, learning and love. Though theirs was a traditional marriage, Ruth and Harley were true partners and equals, each bringing strengths that balanced and complemented the other beautifully.

She had a beautiful singing voice, and her children loved sitting beside her at Mass to hear her sing the hymns. She liked to laugh- with family, with friends, and sometimes at herself. One favorite memory was her enthusiastically dressing as a rapper for a Tri Psi convention, fully embracing the role and enjoying every minute of it.

She was a quiet encourager, not prone to pep talks but insisting that "It'll be better in the morning" or "Things will be ok". In later years, she cared for Harley tirelessly with devotion, patience, and grace through the long goodbye of Alzheimer's disease.

Ruth was a member of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church since 1962 and had been active in the Council of Catholic Women. Her faith was very important to her; she said the rosary every day. She also enjoyed friendships formed through Faculty Dames, Tri Psi Sorority and many social and civic activities throughout the years. Her service to her church and community was simply woven into the fabric of her life. She never sought recognition or talked much about what she did for others - helping people was simply what you do. More than anything, however, she treasured time spent with family - holidays around a crowded table, visits from children and grandchildren, shared stories, family skits, and laughter.

It would be remiss of the rest of the family not to mention and give credit to the

great contribution daughter Susan made to Ruth Ann's health and quality of life for over 25 years. Through Harley's decline, Ruth Ann's loneliness after his death, and through her later years, Susan was a nurse and a companion and so much more. Ruth Ann simply would not have lived so long and so well without Susan's devotion to her.

Ruth Ann's survivors include one son, Mark (Juliette) Rutledge of McKinney, Texas; four daughters, Teresa Rutledge of Reston, Virginia, Susan Kemp (Larry Davis) of Cape Girardeau, Jane Hampson of Herndon, Virginia, and Sarah (Sam) Holland of Niwot, Colorado; seven grandchildren, Matthew Wilson of Dallas, Texas, Tony (Connie) Miller of Lohman, Missouri, Truman Hampson of Herndon, Virginia, Raleigh Hampson of Reston, Virginia, CJ Hampson of Chicago, Illinois, and Lance and Seth Holland of Niwot, Colorado; and three great-grandchildren, Matthew (Makenna) Miller of Jefferson City, Missouri, Charlie Miller of Carbondale, Illinois, and Mandy Miller of Lohman, Missouri.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her beloved husband, Harley; three brothers, Carl, Roche, and Harold Lootens; three sisters, Loretta Zeilman, Louise Adrian, and Virginia Breier and: a son-in-law, James Hampson, and a beloved grandson, Mark Wilson.

Visitation will be from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Funeral Home in Cape Girardeau. Parish Prayers will begin at 5:00 p.m.

Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. Monday, May 18, 2026, at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Cape Girardeau with Rev. Rick Jones officiating.

Burial will follow at Cape County Memorial Park Cemetery in Cape Girardeau.

Memorials in Ruth's honor may be made to St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 1913 Ritter Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701.

Online condolences may be made at [www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com](http://www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 17. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Ford and Sons Mt. Auburn Funeral Home  
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Road  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

## Parish Prayers

MAY 17. 5:00 PM (CT)

Ford and Sons Mt. Auburn Funeral Home  
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Road  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

## Funeral Mass

MAY 18. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church  
1919 Ritter Dr.  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

# Tribute Wall

DR

“ *Ruth was a wonderful person. I met her when Harley was at the Veterans Home. She was such a caring, dedicated wife. Donna Reynolds*

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**Donna Reynolds** - May 20 at 02:53 PM

BM

“ *Susan, regret that I could not come to the visitation and/or the funeral mass. Pray and hope that your many great memories will bring consolation. My memories include those when I was teaching nursing and do remember many of my students. Hugs and prayers, Barb McKeon.* 🙏❤️🤗

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**Barb McKeon** - May 18 at 07:27 PM

SS

“ Today seems the perfect day to write a tribute to Ruth Rutledge since it’s the day my own mother would have turned 95. The Rutledges were our backyard catty-corner neighbors, and our families had much in common. Both of our fathers taught at SEMO, our mothers were friends and comembers of various groups, and my sister and I were about the same ages as their kids. Our parents even shared the same wedding anniversary.

While many of my fondest childhood memories include various Rutledge kids, Ruth was the constant. I compared her to the Brady Bunch mother: unflappable. We loved to play at the Rutledge house because Ruth remained calm no matter how many kids traipsed through her home. It wasn’t that she was ignoring us; she liked to ask us about our activities and lives and was genuine in her interest.

This same inquisitiveness continued in later years. It was always a pleasure to run into her at the Chateau, where as an adult I got to witness more of her sly humor. She was one person I always enjoyed running into and could remember in great detail events I had long since forgotten.

Teresa, Susan, Mark, Jane, and Sarah, I am so very sorry for your loss.

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**Suzanne Shelton** - May 16 at 05:46 PM

LS

“ Larry, S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ruth Ann Rutledge.

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**Larry, S.** - May 15 at 09:36 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Ruth Ann Rutledge.*



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May 15 at 08:50 AM



“ *What a wonderful life she had ,I will never forget her baked ham (Delicious).My thoughts and prayers for my cousins in Cape G.*  
*Tom Breier*

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**Tom Breier** - May 12 at 10:59 AM

PL

“ My dear friends! So much fun and memories with your sweet mom! Truly a jewel. She was the eternal optimist and put everything in the right perspective! True statements. She would talk about Harley underlining the print in magazines and books and when we were getting ready to go out comment on our outfits and ask what we were going to do! Always positive. Oh and funny! One time Susan and I were pushing her in wheel chair thru the airport and her hair was flying back. I think I may have been pushing a little fast! She looked up at me and said “ you may be a good nurse but you are a terrible driver!” She made comments on the people waiting to pre board and how she really didn’t need to be in that line as she clearly was not like them! In chateau always greeted me with a sweet smile and kind word! Always saying “ well I’m just fine”. Got into some political discussions as well. Always informed and even kind about her opinions! We talked about the rosary and not being of the catholic faith she taught me so much! I will miss you and all your love and everything about your kind spirit. Oh another one. We were on the plane. A couple of us were cutting up ( she said flirting) with the flight attendant. He brought us wine! She looked at us and said “ well did you pay for that”? You know. Us rebels! All in great fun. We laughed a lot. She had all the right priorities in life! May your hearts be comforted in this sad time. Love you all. Pam

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**Pamela Lewis** - May 12 at 09:39 AM

RL

“ Patti and I send our deepest sympathies to all of Ruth’s survivors. Having been her Dentist for 30+ years as well as various family members, I always looked forward to our “ visits” in my office. She was ALWAYS upbeat, sweet , and sharp as a tack. Memories are forever and I know and trust her offspring and theirs will keep them in their hearts.

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**Ron Lessmann** - May 12 at 08:15 AM

DH

“ Dear Rutledge Family, It is hard to give up a Mom at any age. Just as your Mom once held you in her arms so warm and secure, so now Jesus is holding her in His loving arms. What a comfort! In the book *Life after Life*, hospital personnel told stories about those who died and were minute resuscitated. Their patients said that heaven was so beautiful that they did not want to come back, so I can picture your Mom with her sweet smile and voice enjoying everything she sees in heaven. And though we will miss her we will see her again!  
God's love and ours. From your down the hill neighbors on Westridge Drive for 59 years. Harold and Jeanine Hager

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**Dr. Harold and Jeanine Hager** - May 11 at 10:09 PM

JP

“ Dear Teresa, Susan, Mark, Jane & Sarah:  
We are very sorry to hear your Mom's passing away. We knew your Mom all our life in Cape Girardeau and we surely miss her friendship and kindness. We share your sorrow and pray that you all will have comfort and strength in the coming weeks and months....  
Warm regards  
Joseph & Teresa PAIKEDAY  
May 11, 2026

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**Joseph Paikeday** - May 11 at 05:19 PM