



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, Susan Kemp (Larry Davis) of Cape Girardeau, Teresa Rutledge of Reston, Virginia, 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, Clara 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.

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

Cemetery Details

Cape County Memorial Park Cemetery

2315 Highway 61 North
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
(573) 334-1909
<https://www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com/>

Upcoming 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

Funeral Mass

MAY 18. 10:00 AM (CT)

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