

formerly of Kelly, KS



Rita Marie Gockel, 89, formerly of Kelly, Kansas, passed away on Saturday January 17, 2015, at Hillside Village, De Soto, Kansas following a short illness.

Rita was born on the family farm, southwest of Kelly, Kansas, on May 24, 1925. The oldest daughter of Henry F. Rottinghaus and Magdalene G. (Steinlage) Rottinghaus's ten children. Rita grew up in the Kelly area. She attended first grade at St. Patrick's Catholic School in Corning, Kansas. For the next seven years, Rita attended grade school at St. Bede's Catholic Grade school in Kelly, Kansas. The Rottinghaus family owned two white horses named Queen and Fly, who were hitched on cold or wet days for the trip to school.

Rita attended only one day of High School in Kelly, before it was decided that she would stay home and help her mother, Magdalene. Rita's mother was often called "Lena" by family and close friends, a nickname given to her by Rita's grandmother, Anna Steinlage. Magdalene had been sick for a few years with headaches and fainting spells. Rita worshiped her mother, so she did not look at this as a burden. Magdalene passed away on August 30, 1944 and Rita then took over her mother's duties on the farm: cooking, cleaning and milking the cows with her father Henry and older brother Clarence. As the years went on, Rita's younger family members would help with these duties. After Rita was kicked by a cow resulting in a ruptured appendix, her father decided Rita's milking days were over.

Rita met her future husband, Raymond Gockel, in May 1946, while attending a dance in Corning, Kansas. Rita and Raymond were married on June 12, 1947, the same day as her father, Henry's birthday. After looking in Falls City, Nebraska and Horton, Kansas, Rita and Raymond opened a Maw and Paw grocery store in Horton, Kansas, on 17 June 1947, the same day as Raymond's father, Frank's birthday. Rita and Raymond lived in the apartment above the grocery store, where soon the two oldest children joined the family. The Gockel Grocery Store would move on to three different locations over the years. On October 21, 2006, after 59 years of marriage, Raymond passed away.

Rita is survived by her children: Carole Jo Tollefson (Tim), Tulsa, OK.; Craig J. Gockel, Shawnee, KS.; Douglas L. Gockel (Carol), Dallas, TX.; Barry E. Gockel, Kansas City, KS.; and Tana M. Ray, Shawnee, KS.; Brothers: Clarence Rottinghaus, Wetmore, KS.; Norbert Rottinghaus, Leawood, KS.; Raymond Rottinghaus, Seneca, KS.; Sisters: Helen Liertz, Seneca, KS.; Rose Heiman, Axtell, KS.; Mary Sieben, Prairie Village, KS.; Dorothy Hammes, Seneca,

KS.; and many Grandchildren and Great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Raymond, parents Henry and Magdalene Rottinghaus and brothers Bernard Rottinghaus and Edwin Rottinghaus.

During their marriage, Raymond and Rita traveled to many countries. Rita particularly liked visiting Germany where her father and Rita had visited several times together. She visited many cousins of the Rottinghaus family in Germany over the years and during her last two trips, stayed with the Gockel family in Landenbeck, Germany. Rita enjoyed helping Maria Gockel with the Household Choirs of the Gockel Bauernhof, build in 1831 and included a Holstein's Dairy, which reminded Rita of her youth. Rita really enjoyed her days spent with Maria Gockel. Both also enjoyed their time spent in the Bier Cellar together. After Raymond's death Rita never traveled again.

Rita had a special place in her heart for the Sisters of Charity in Leavenworth, Kansas to which her sister-in-law, Sister Mary Hubert Gockel belonged. She was a member of the St. Joseph's Catholic Church and St. Joseph Quilting Circle. Rita completed and donated many beautiful quilts and quilt blocks for the St. Joseph Catholic Church raffles. Rita loved living a Hillside Village of De Soto and the residents and staff loved her. She was a warm, caring member of the Hillside Village Community and will be sadly missed.

Visitation and Funeral Mass

Visitation will be 5 – 7 p.m., Wednesday January 21st at the Amos Family Funeral Home in Shawnee, KS. The Rosary will be prayed at 7 p.m.

Mass of Resurrection will be at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Shawnee, KS. on Thursday January 22nd at 10:00 am. Burial will be next to her husband, Raymond, will immediately follow at the St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery, Shawnee, KS. Pallbearers are Jim Rottinghaus, Gary Steinlage, Dick Steinlage, Craig Gockel, Joe Jennings and Josh Lott.