



Jean D. Kempski

May 2, 2022

(nee Majewski) Born to Eternal Life May 2, 2022, at the age of 92 years. Beloved wife of the late Gilbert. Loving mom of the late Dean (Mary Ellen) Kempski, Janet (Mike) Andrysczyk and Joan (Roy) Rice. Grandmother of Sarah (Nim), Andy (Jenny), Cathy (Tim), Vinnie (Kelly), Leah (Mike), Hannah, and Emily. Further survived by five great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Mom was born on September 10th, 1929, to Alexander and Martha Majewski. She was the youngest of six children, two of whom died at birth. The child of young Polish immigrants from the Warsaw area, her early life included immersion in Polish language, food, and customs. She grew up on the south side of Milwaukee near 7th and Oklahoma. Her life as a depression era child was full of memories of the time! She often reminisced about heading to Mitchell Street on the bus to bring back a duck (alive!) for dinner and for it's feather down to be used for homemade pillows. She spoke of how her mother would hand sew all her clothes. (Mom learned from her mother her talent for anything involving mending or hemming. Her work was beautiful!) Mom also remembered sitting patiently on the steps of the local shoe store while she listened to her mother haggle for a better price on a new pair!! The Hinky Dinky Trolley, which ran along 6th Street, was her thoroughfare to the downtown, to 5 cent theaters, and to the library. A handed down bike was a major mode of travel as well, especially to South Shore Park where she spent

summers swimming with friends. The bike is the topic of a story Mom told often during her lifetime. Christened Janina (Ya-nee-na), which is Polish for Jennifer, she never liked her name. By her recount, at age 10, she rode her bike downtown, alone, to change her name to "Jean" on her birth certificate. She claimed she paid the clerk 50 cents and just "had her name changed." For years, we were doubtful of the simplicity of this story. After her 88th birthday, she needed an original birth certificate for driver's license renewal. (Yes, she still drove.) At the courthouse downtown, we watched the clerk pull out a huge book of documents, open to her certificate, blow off the dust, and bring it to show us. Sure enough, "Janina" was hastily crossed off, and the name "Jean" written under it. Clerk initials with the word "Paid" were on the back of the document. "I told you!" she said.

She reminisced that her 7th Street neighborhood was visited by the ice man and the rag man who apparently made his presence known by yelling, "Lampy! Lampy! Lampy!" Mom had fond memories of Oklahoma Avenue School and her home parish of St. Helen's. In 4th grade, her teacher introduced a pen pal exchange activity to the class. Mom chose the name of a girl from England. Rita, a lovely, vivacious pen pal, would go on to correspond with Mom for the next 83 years. They only met once, and it was an experience she treasured! They shared a lifetime of happiness and heartaches through written letters and greeting cards. Mom was always so excited to receive a new letter and would carry it around in her purse for weeks until she knew everyone had read it! World War II brought about the overseas draft of her two brothers, Chester and Eddie. Both returned home safely! The later war years saw her as a student at Pulaski High School. During this time, she worked for Tompkins Ice Cream Store (She continued to use an original silver ice cream scoop from the shop until the week before her death). Her yearbooks are full of messages from friends telling her that "Tompkins would close up without her"! From high school she went on to Misericordia College and graduated as a registered nurse. Her career included working at old St. Luke's and at St. Francis Hospital. She retired from St. Francis after 35 years in Labor and

Delivery. During college, she met Dad at an Eagle's Club Ballroom Dance. Her oldest brother led a concertina band called, "Chet and the Royal Ramblers." She and her sister Lucy were watching them play the night dad asked her to dance. He later told Mom that his mother did not care for him going to the Eagle's Room! We are glad he did not listen! Mom and Dad were married at St. Helen's Church and lived for several years in her parents' home, in an upper flat designed and built by her brother Eddie just for them.

She and Dad had two children while living in the upper flat, Dean and Janet. Later, the entire family moved into a duplex off of 20th and Bolivar built by her parents. Here she had her third child, Joan. Mom was an active member of St. Roman's Parish and was proud to say that her son Dean was in the first 8th grade graduating class. All 3 children graduated from and were married at St. Roman's. Mom's years in the duplex on LeRoy Avenue were spent taking care of her children, as well as her own mother and father. Her father needed extra assistance due to blindness, and both she and her sister were his caregivers. A special feature of the duplex was a full completed basement, equipped with a bar, rec room and pool table! Mom had many memories of weddings, birthdays, holidays, and other celebrations that took place here!!!! It was a gathering for eating, playing cards, and dancing (especially Polkas) and she always decorated for the occasion! Her red velvet cake and shrimp salad were always favorites for eating!

Mom was proud to be present as the delivery nurse for the birth of several of her grandchildren, as well as other great nieces and nephews in the family. With grandchildren came new memories; birthdays, school events, holidays, graduations, and marriages. She will always be remembered for her tradition of putting the month and date in the right hand corner of every card she signed. She wanted to make sure the recipient knew which year it was from. Because she rarely threw out any card or letter she received, she made sure everyone had a way of keeping track of their own!! When attending events, Mom was definitely a chatter. She could easily strike up a conversation with

anyone around her and often made the comment that when she was in the supermarket, people would always come up to her and randomly start up a conversation or ask for help. More likely, she was the one who instigated the conversation! At her youngest granddaughters' volleyball and powerlifting meets she'd spend hours chatting away with spectator parents who knew her as "Bu." (Busha).

Although she always said she didn't have any major "hobbies," she was always up for accompanying family to events and happenings. She was the "package deal" when family went on excursions... museums, plays, coffee shops, parks, college tours, Up North trip, shopping junkets, movies, antiquing, Brewer's games, and farmer's markets were just a few of the expeditions she took alongside family members. She definitely liked to keep up with the latest trends. She was invested in reading all books in the Twilight Series (she was Team Jacob), then moved on to completing the Hunger Games Books. When the movies came out from each of the book series, she was in the theater alongside the teens and twenty somethings watching the book characters come to life! Never much for technology, she did take one I Pad class at a local senior center. The book series, 50 Shades of Grey (quite a read for an 80ish lady) had come out and we only could get the last book on Kindle... she so wanted to know how to navigate it!!!! She also wanted to find out what an "A- P- P" (app) was. We never were quite able to explain it well! The early death of her husband Gil at age 62 and unexpected death of her son Dean at 47 were crushing for Mom. Harder yet was being preceded in death by her 2 brothers, sister, brother-in-law, and 4 sisters-in-law. The deaths created in her a strong stubbornness for independence, and she was adamant about being able to do things for herself. The ability to drive was a must for Mom and she held on dearly to the privilege, until, due to severe osteoarthritis, she was unable to do so. She enjoyed weekly trips to Pick and Save, Aldi, and Walmart where she'd spend hours comparing prices and reading labels... just for the fun of it!!! Her special bonds with her various Grand-Dogs over the years also gave her a reason to head out during the day.

She kept a bag of dog biscuits in her trunk just in case she needed to check on them.

The last three years were notably Mom's most difficult, and most lonely. The Pandemic stole precious family time, and her physical and mental health declined. She never lost her desire to stay connected with family, and by communicating through windows, doors, and over a third floor balcony we tried to keep her in the loop of all that was going on.

She fought valiantly at the end to keep her thoughts clear. She would continually clarify events and time lines and always wanted to check in to make sure she had the latest news. Mom celebrated the recent births of adorable new great grand-children, she loved seeing Facebook posts of a granddaughter's weekend family trips, she was part of the conversation plans for a granddaughter's upcoming wedding, she visited a grandson's lovely new home, and watched a grandchild receive a doctorate degree. She saw her beautiful legacy first hand and knew her time was coming to a close. She talked of Dean, and Dad, and Lucy. She said she saw them often and missed them so much. She said her dreams of them were so vivid, she did not know if they really were dreams. We think they were telling her it was time. She had a long line of loved ones who cheered her on.

Whenever she hung up a phone call, she would always brightly say, "Over and Out!" Mom has crossed over, but never, ever, ever will be out of our hearts.

Visitation Tuesday, May 10 from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM at ST. ROMAN CHURCH (1810 W. Bolivar Ave., Milwaukee) followed by the celebration of Mass of Christian Burial at 12:00 PM. Interment St. Adalbert Cemetery.

Rozga Funeral & Cremation Services

Rozga-Walloch Chapel

4309 South 20th Street

Milwaukee, WI 53221

Cemetery Details

St. Adalbert Cemetery

3801 S. 6th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53221

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 10. 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St Roman Church
1810 West Bolivar Ave
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53221

Mass of Christian Burial

MAY 10. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

St Roman Church
1810 West Bolivar Ave
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53221