

Hiawatha , KS



Josephine M. "Jo" Merchant, died peacefully with family and friend by her side Sunday evening, November 19, 2017, at Maple Heights Nursing Home where she had been a resident a couple of years. She previously had been a resident of Vintage Park Assisted Living in Hiawatha. She was 98.

Jo was born near Everest, Kansas, October 12, 1919, one of twelve children born to the late Martin and Josephine Schwindt Martinson and had lived in Brown County all of her life. Her family moved to the Fairview/Hiawatha area where they settled and raised their family where she attended Walnut and Victory country schools prior to attending high school in Hiawatha.

Mrs. Merchant was a member of Bethany United Church of Christ of Hiawatha. Her passion was the auxiliaries to veteran organizations: served as vice-president to Homer-White American Legion Post #66; served as vice president to VFW Post #5210, both of Hiawatha. She was very active selling the 'poppies' on their behalf for many years. She enjoyed making comforters, spending hours playing board games and cards with whoever would play; and would very much like to win! She enjoyed cooking with one of her favorite dishes was fried chicken. Jo stated one of her greatest accomplishments was raising her family. She enjoyed her grandchildren; attending family reunions; and having the grandchildren spend summers with her on the family farm. She also enjoyed fishing.

She married Donald Merchant November 22, 1936, at Hiawatha. They farmed and raised livestock all of their married life northeast of Hiawatha. She was a farm wife in the true sense of doing whatever needed to be done on the farm....along with raising her family. He died March 22, 1999. She was preceded in death by a great-grandson Darren Lee Cox; and was the last of her 12 siblings: Oscar Martinson, Lewis Martinson, Lena Meyer, Grace Brown, Edith Lange, George Martinson, Walter Martinson, Willard Martinson, Myrtle Weidman, Leslie Martinson, and Charles Martinson.

Survivors include five children: Mary Lou Francis of Hiawatha, Donna Jo Burke of Kansas City, MO, Ronald Merchant (Nina) of Hiawatha, Larry Merchant (Julie) of Warrensburg, MO, John Merchant (Pat) of rural Hiawatha; 13 grandchildren; with many, many great grand and great-great grandchildren; with numerous nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Jo's life is planned for 2 p.m. Wednesday, November 22, at Bethany United Church of Christ in Hiawatha. Shane Spangler will officiate, with Rich Lehmkuhl to assist. Interment will follow at Hiawatha Cemetery.

Friends may call at the Chapel Oaks Funeral Home in Hiawatha, after 10 a.m. Tuesday, where the family will meet from 7 until 9 Tuesday evening.

Memorial contributions are suggested to American Cancer Society or Freedom Hospice, which may be sent in care of the funeral home, 124 S 7th St., 66434.

www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com