

Atchison, KS

Rita Irene Leonardi, 86, passed away on Thursday, May 7, 2020 with her family and caregiver by her side at the home of Rhonda & Steve Lorenz.

A family Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11:00 am on Monday, May 11, 2020 at St. Joseph Church with Fr. Jeremy Heppler as Celebrant. Burial will follow in the Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Atchison KS. The family will receive friends from 10:00 to 11:00 am on Monday at St. Joseph Church, where social distancing will be requested. Memorial contributions are suggested to St. Benedict's Parish and may be sent in care of the Becker-Dyer-Stanton Funeral Home who is handling the arrangements. Condolences and remembrances to the family may be left online at www.beckerdyer.com.

Rita was born December 26, 1933 in Atchison, Kansas the daughter of Edmond T. and Irene (Whelan) Leonardi. She lived her entire life on the family farm, until she moved in with her niece's family. Rita attended high school at Mount Saint Scholastica Academy, graduating in 1951. She then attended Mount Saint Scholastica College and graduated in 1955. Rita received her Master's Degree in Education from Emporia State Teachers College. Rita became an elementary teacher in the Atchison area, starting at Terry No. 5 School, a one room school house. She also taught at the Kansas Children's Receiving Home. Rita finished her 36-year teaching career in the Atchison Public Schools of Central, Franklin and Washington.

Rita loved animals of all kinds, especially her sheep, which she attended to until her illness. She had a quiet, gentle, and kind nature about her, and a deep faith in the Lord. Her quick wit provided her family with many chuckles and fond memories to cherish.

Rita loved to draw and paint, cook, and be outdoors with nature. She was devoted to her nieces, nephew and their families.

Rita is survived by her caregivers; her niece, Rhonda Lorenz, and husband Steve Lorenz, her great-niece Bria Lorenz, and her devoted caregiver Tammy Freeman. Additional survivors include her sister-in-law, Marge Leonardi, her niece, Linda (Scott) Walton, and her nephew, Mark (Lori) Leonardi. She has six great-nieces and nephews, and three great-great-nieces.

Rita was preceded in death by her parents, and two brothers, Edwin J. Leonardi and Ronnie E. Leonardi.