



Charlotte Wiles

Charlotte Marie Wiles, 94, a matriarch who worked hard to keep her family close and connected, died at 6:55 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29, 2011, after a two-year illness in the comfortable surroundings of her home of 60 years, cared for by her loving family and friends.

She was born on Dec. 31, 1916, to Charles and Mabel (Dragoo) Powers, in a country home that still stands outside of Kokomo. She married James Kenneth (Kenny) Wiles on June 20, 1936, and they celebrated 50 years of marriage before he passed away on Oct. 10, 1986.

A lifelong resident of Kokomo, she called herself "a walking history book," and was proud to live in the era often referenced as the greatest in U.S. history. She revered the events of her lifetime and enjoyed discussing those with her family. The darkest moments, she often recalled, were the years of World War II when her two brothers, Bill Powers, who served with the Air Force in Italy, and Dick Powers, who served in the South Pacific with the Army, were away. Dick was overseas for five years without her family's knowledge of his whereabouts.

Charlotte was influenced in early life by her Irish immigrant grandparents, with whom she lived while attending St. Patrick Catholic School. Her grandparents, plus several uncles and aunts from this railroad-building family, provided a flavorful Irish Catholic background that she would draw upon and which served her well through the peaks and valleys of her life.

She met Kenny, the love of her life, at a Depression-era dance where admission was gained by contributing a can of food. A striking young lady, Charlotte quickly captured Kenny's heart, but a 10-year age difference postponed the romance temporarily. Their courtship in the cash-starved days of the Depression required Kenny to walk 2 miles each way from his home on South Courtland Avenue to her home on North Webster Street. They were married at St. Patrick Catholic Church and three years later began their family.

A very creative person, Charlotte's artistic efforts began in the pre-teen years when she completed her first landscape oil painting. She had a natural appreciation for the beauty of sunsets and sunrises, flowers, lakes and streams, and nature's magical works at the changing of seasons. After the busy years of raising her family, she turned her attention to china painting and produced beautiful pieces treasured by family members. When she could no longer paint china, she continued to capture nature's beauty – and precious family memories – with her camera.

A devout Christian, Charlotte was a founding member of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church. She and Kenny actively participated in fundraising events to help establish the fledgling church, and Charlotte often contributed her artwork to help raise funds. Prayer was an instrument of hope and comfort that she faithfully shared with anyone who needed it. Hers was a kind, caring voice one could hear on the St. Joan Prayer Line until health concerns no longer allowed it. She was a member of the Rosary Society and the Catholic Family Movement.

Charlotte was a graduate of Clay Township High School in Howard County. Also, she belonged to the Fraternal Order of the Eagles women's auxiliary and the China Guild.

Survivors include four loving children. They are Nancy Wiles, at home, Rita (Bob) Hullinger, Kokomo, Mary (George) Addison, Knoxville, Tenn., and John (Anne) Wiles, Kokomo; a sister, Johanna Thompson, Center; sisters-in-law, Naomi Powers and Mary Schmidt, Kokomo; grandchildren, Lisa Hullinger (Mark) York, Fishers, Scott Hullinger,

Westfield, Tonya (Jeff) Wolfe, Kodak, Tenn., Travis (Melinda) Addison, Haines City, Fla., Jamie (Josh) Wiles-Smith, Charleston, S.C., Jessica Lytle (Josh); great-grandchildren, Addie and Anna Wolfe, Daniel, Illiana and Aniya Addison, Emily York, Elisabeth and Bridget Baumfalk and Liam Wiles-Smith.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; two brothers, Bill and Dick Powers; and a grandson, Robert Matthew Hullinger.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be 11 a.m. Tuesday at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, 3155 S. 200 West, Kokomo, with Father David Huemmer officiating. Burial will follow at Memorial Park Cemetery. Friends may visit with the family from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Monday at Ellers Mortuary, Webster Street Chapel, 3400 S. Webster St., with a Scripture service at 7:30 p.m. There will also be one hour of visitation prior to the Mass on Tuesday. Memorial contributions may be made to VNS Hospice, envelopes will be provided at the funeral home. You are invited to read Charlotte's obituary at www.ellersmortuary.com, where you may sign the guest book, share a personal message, or order flowers for the family.

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