



## Arlene Jane (nee Van Etten) West

November 5, 2016

ARLENE JANE WEST, maiden name Van Etten

Born, April 21, 1921 in Minneapolis

Preceded in death by her husband of 47 years, Earl C. West

Survived by son, Ronald Earl West; daughter, Rebecca Anne West; granddaughters, J. Rose Sorenson and Alexa Smallwood; grandson-in-law Kyle Smallwood, sister -and brother -in- law Zelda and Orville Bollenbach; goddaughters Lori Haugen and Lynn Bateman.

A longtime survivor of colon, breast and skin cancers, she died of old age.

At 95, most of her dear family, friends, church friends, and fellow POLK.of A dancers will welcome her on the other side, but she will be greatly missed by many friends, neighbors and family.

Many thanks to Haven Home of Maple Plain for their years of loving care and friendship to a special lady.

Service to be held at Faith Lilac Way Lutheran Church, Robbinsdale at 4 p.m.  
Visitation at 3.

Arlene loved bright colors! Please wear something colorful in her memory.

Private burial at Crystal Lake Cemetery, Minneapolis on Monday.

Memorials to Colon Cancer Alliance or family.

Her father's nickname for her was "Happy". But she didn't have a happy start. Arlene didn't have a mom. Her mother died when she was around 4, and she was abandoned by her father, raised by her little German grandmother. She graduated at 16. The first time she drove a car was to the cemetery at her uncle's funeral – no one taught her. She took a train from Sauk Rapids to Minneapolis alone at 16, without a job, money, or a place to stay to begin her own life.

Arlene was born in the year that women got the right to vote. How she would have loved to see a woman President. She missed her calling as a Washington socialite. She was hardwired to love politics and she loved parties. The political and religious debates at her table were inspirational.

Arlene loved life. She loved to cook and bake and eat. She loved parties and dancing and Christmas.

She had an opinion about everything. Her world was black and white. Right and wrong were absolute.

She loved lace and bright colors and purses and good jewelry. She loved to

make doll clothes and play jacks and board games with her kids. She was an exquisite tailor, and knew how to tailor coats and suits. She could fry chicken like nobody's business. She made pickles, peach pies, baked beans, and roast beef, with never enough onions, mashed potatoes, turkey dinners. She loved to set a special table. She baked cookies for everyone, and wasn't above using cookies to bribe unsuspecting home repairmen. She baited worms for her kids to catch countless stringers of sunfish, and boned them all after frying them up. On summer nights, she'd play songs from the 30s and 40s on the Hammond organ.

Aside from polka dancing, her real passion was preaching. She loved to write sermons. She loved having a soapbox. And she always had a ministry whether anyone recognized it or not – she liked to say we didn't have to help people on the other side of the world. We could help them right here. She was the quiet definition of Lutheran faith – expressed in sermons and music and service. She never lost her innocence or became bitter.