



Betty Jane Engels

October 20, 1924 - March 1, 2013

Mineral Point - Betty Jane Engels died March 1, 2013 at the age of 88. With her family and loved ones around her, her dear heart accepted its rest.

She was born the youngest of six children to Ida (Schenke) and Edward Marquart in Watertown, Wisconsin on October 20, 1924. Her childhood was shaped by the challenges of profound hearing loss and a world drawn thin and hungry by The Great Depression. Yet she had the great treasure of close and loving sisters and a clever and talented Pa who could somehow create whatever was needed to help his family and others get by. Betty was just 16 years old when her mother died.

During the years of World War II, she worked at the Fairbanks-Morse defense plant in Beloit. There she met and fell in love with Jim Engels. They married in Mineral Point in 1944. She had five children and spent the best years of her life bestowing on her kids the gifts of intelligence, creativity and love. Betty had a deep and gentle love for animals--those wild and free as well as those brought into her home as part of the family. Her kitchen always smelled of wonderful food and her table always offered an abundance she herself had never known growing up.

In the early 70's, with a small inheritance from a distant relative, Betty enrolled in The University of Wisconsin, Platteville and acquired a degree in art

education. She became Mrs. Engels, the circuit-riding art teacher of the Iowa-Grant School District. She carried her sparkle, talent and supplies to a different classroom every hour of the day and a different small town school each day of the week. Hundreds of children loved her and eagerly awaited their magical one hour a week with her.

In 1980 she was awarded the opportunity to teach art for a trimester in Australia. She visited urban schools as well as primitive classrooms for Aboriginal children. She journeyed into the remote desert outback and climbed to the top of the sacred mount Uluru, one of the oldest rocks on Earth, to look out upon the Dreamtime of an ancient branch of the family of man. A vision she held in her heart from that day on.

Upon retirement, Betty got to enjoy some wonderful adventures travelling with her husband and her dear friend Laura Nohr. Betty and Jim spent many Golden Pond summers in their little cottage on Miner Lake, near Waupaca. She volunteered many hours a week at an exotic animal park, getting right in the cages and enclosures to cuddle and reassure a timid baby wallaby or coax loud purrs from a joyful tiger cub. All the animals knew her as "she who brings us food!"

She left the world her graceful pottery and a few cherished paintings. She wrote poetry. She loved classical music. She had wisdom, wit and a delightfully nefarious sense of humor that never ceased to take people by surprise.

She leaves behind dear friends Geri Peterson and Mary Ann Hanna, as well as her children and their loved ones: Raven Okeefe (Jane) and Ian Caldicott of Scio, Oregon; Bill Engels and Annette Felice of Middleton; Jill Engels and Chuck Pound of Mineral Point; Gail and Russ Dengel of Mazomanie and Laurie and Steve Schmidt of Menomonee Falls. She was preceded in death

by her parents; her brother Chester; her sisters Florence, Mary Mae, Lois and Dorothy; her dear husband Jim and many beloved pets.

Betty asked that a service not be held for her, so please take a moment to remember her in your own way.

Memorial donations made in her name to the Iowa County Humane Society would be a beautiful and meaningful tribute to the life of a woman who found profound love and understanding in the eyes of beloved creatures.

Tribute Wall

JF

“ We absolutely loved Mrs. Engels! Our grade school in Rewey wasn't the happiest school and it certainly didn't have kind teachers but the absolute bright spot once a week "art class with Mrs. Engels"! She was truly amazing. I kept everything we made in art class and still have the box today (some returned to me after my parents died). It's so rare and so incredibly wonderful to experience her warmth and love as a person and as a teacher. Blessings upon her and her family and congratulations on a life well lived!

Jamisen Fox - June 15 at 05:39 AM



“ Betty Jane Engels

November 15, 2022 at 06:49 AM

BB

“ So sorry to hear about Mrs. Engels passing. She was my gradeschool art teacher at Cobb Elementary. Everyone loved her. I remember her telling us about her Australia trip...very fascinating to a bunch of kids. Such a gentle, kind, wonderful lady.

Bradley Bruner - April 28, 2018 at 02:25 AM

BH

“ So sad to hear of this. I had her as my art teacher in grade school. I was out on the day we were to make stuff out of clay for the kilm and she made me a dog head. still have it, and it is awesome. Even had the tongue sticking out of it's mouth which got broke off over the years but I still have it and love it. That truly was the one class you looked forward to when a kid.
RIP Mrs. Engels

Bob Huehne - April 28, 2018 at 02:25 AM

SU

“ Mrs.Engels was my elementary art teacher. She was everyone's favorite. She was filled with warmth and love--it literally exuded from her. We looked forward to art every week--we got to see her on Thursdays. I was so sorry to hear that she had passed and am sorry for your loss. I'm sure many of her former students will post and I hope you find comfort in their wonderful memories of her. She was a wonderful, wonderful lady.

Sara Uppena - April 28, 2018 at 02:25 AM

NI

“ Loved her as a teacher! The obituary was right waited all week for her art class

Niki - April 28, 2018 at 02:25 AM

MK

“ Jill & family: I just wanted to say I'm sorry for your loss. Your Mom was a lady and such an asset to the community. She will be missed but know that she will be in a better place now with your Dad.

Mary A. Knutson - April 28, 2018 at 02:25 AM

JJ

“ Betty was like an older sister to me. As a teen, I could talk to her and she would listen, never judging or preaching. She had a wonderful way of relating to people. I will never forget her kindness and empathy. Jane Janes

Jane Janes - April 28, 2018 at 02:25 AM