



Edwina H. VanDruten

March 18, 1936 - July 29, 2022

Edwina Van Druten, 86, of Toledo, Ohio, died peacefully on Friday, July 29th at Sunset House, where she was surrounded by family and women who treated her like family while they cared for “the lady with a smile always on her face”.

Affectionately referred to as “Oma” by everyone who met her (even if she wasn’t their grandmother), Edwina Hanny Portier was born in Magelang, Indonesia, on the island of Java, on March 18, 1936, to Johan Karel and Leentje (Latumeten) Portier. Her face would light up with stories of her three brothers (Eddie, Jules, and Richard) and two sisters (Sjane and Olga) who she adored and helped care for after their father passed away during World War II after being forced to work in a Burmese concentration camp in what is now Myanmar. Tales of spending time in an orphanage with her sisters and the friendships they made there under the loving care of Catholic nuns while her mother worked desperately to bring them home only strengthened Oma’s Catholic faith. Tumultuous wartime decisions by widowed mothers to entrust the temporary care of their children to convents and monasteries was not uncommon at the time and Oma always spoke fondly of her time there and of the people she met, some of whom she kept lifelong friendships with.

Oma was raised by a man she came to love as a second dad, her stepfather Richard “Dick” Nitschmann, whom her mother married shortly after the war

and whose younger acquaintances introduced her to the man who would sweep her off of her feet and change the course of her life: Carl van Druten.

Carl and Edwina married in Indonesia on January 4, 1954, and lived in Sumatra on the Goodyear rubber plantation, where Carl was in engineering and oversaw the transportation department. Carl and Edwina were the light of each other's lives. In Indonesia they had two sons, Tony and Harry, before moving to Carl's home country of the Netherlands, where Frank and Paul were born. Oma and Opa came to America in October 1961 via a month-long boat ride and embraced life in the States while always teaching their family about their roots.

When she got to America, Oma knew no English, but taught herself by building relationships with her friendly and welcoming disposition and became a lifelong reader of *The Toledo Blade*. It's hard to imagine being the pregnant 25-year-old mother of four who had to struggle with the battle between losing her homeland and the parents and siblings she left behind and the adventure and uncertainty of a promised new land, especially while blindly following her spouse and depending on her faith and love for him after he decided that it was time for his family to fulfill the American Dream, but she did it with a grace she carried until her passing.

Baby number five – her “one and only” daughter, Edwina - was born less than a year after their arrival in the States. Had Oma not been the strong, supportive, kind, caring, and always optimistic mother and wife she was, her kids and her husband may not have had the opportunity to thrive in the States like everyone hoped they would. Oma poured that love and care into her husband, her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, who were her pride and joy. Traveling together, frequently visiting them, cooking for them, watching their sporting events, telling them stories, pouring over maps together, and teaching them Dutch and Indonesian was how she spent her

life. Her “liefs” (darlings) and “sayangs” (sweethearts) were her life. She was the force behind the family, the love and calm presence during joys and pains, and throughout Oma’s entire life, she never met a stranger and never let language barriers prevent her from connecting with people. Every person who met her talked about how her smile lit up the room. We know it lit up the world.

Edwina was preceded in death by her husband, Carl Van Druten; son, Paul Van Druten; and stepson, Frans Van Druten. She is lovingly survived by her children, Tony (Marcia) Van Druten, Harry Van Druten, Frank (Jennifer) Van Druten, Edwina (James) Kurt; grandchildren, Krista (Kurt) Glenn, Kinsey Van Druten, Matt Van Druten, Anne Van Druten, Sarah Van Druten, James Van Druten, Robbie Van Druten, Anneke Kurt, Amanda (Kengo) Kato, Katelyn Kurt; step-grandchildren Hans Van Druten, Windy Van Druten, and Karel Van Druten and their families; great-grandchildren Uma Van Druten, Bruce Godlewski, Stella Glenn, Maria Kato, Hank Glenn, and Jinbo Kato; as well as so many family and friends all over the globe, especially her loving sister, Olga.

Family and friends are invited to visit from 2pm to 8pm, with Rosary at 7pm, on Tuesday, August 2, 2022, in the Ansberg-West Funeral Home, 3000 W. Sylvania Ave. in Toledo. A funeral Mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church will begin at 10am on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, 5373 Main St. in Sylvania. Interment will follow at Toledo Memorial Cemetery.

Those planning an expression of sympathy are asked to consider a donation to Catholic Charities or to the Catholic high school of their choice. Online condolences can be shared at www.ansberg-west.com.

Cemetery Details

Toledo Memorial Park

6382 Monroe Street
Sylvania, OH 43560

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 2. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Ansberg-West Funeral Home
3000 W. Sylvania Ave
Toledo, OH 43613

Mass of the Resurrection

AUG 3. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Joseph Church Sylvania
5373 Main Street
Sylvania, OH 43560

Tribute Wall

JR

“ Dear family, We sympathize with your grief and wish you a lot of strength to bear this loss. We cherish the beautiful memories we have of our visit to Winnie in 2008. Love you all, Sylvia & Jos

Jos & Sylvia Riechelmann - August 03, 2022 at 09:10 AM

KC

“ Rest in peace Mrs. VanDruten. Thanks for being a good neighbor and taking care of us. The love you showed us, your smile, and your giggles are remembered fondly. The dutch windmill cookies always remind me of you and your wonderful family. God bless Tony, Harry, Frankie, and Edwina and the many family and friends who will cherish you forever. Love you, Kelly Crawford

Kelly Crawford - July 31, 2022 at 03:27 PM

WR

“ Dear family, our deepest feelings off sadness for you all. We hope you'll find the support with eachother. Our thoughts are with you .
Wim, Linda, Yorick and Sten

Wim Leusink and Linda Russ - July 31, 2022 at 11:37 AM

SW

“ I'll always remember Mrs. Van Druten , she was lively , lovely and caring . Loved her flower dresses and her magnificent cooking . RIP , Sita Wiczynski.

Sita Wiczynski - July 30, 2022 at 09:00 PM

JS

Oh Tante Winny, you were always so loving and funny and your laugh, I will never forget! Remembering you and my mom sitting at the kitchen table, talking, laughing... your smile was always there. Mom is heartbroken at the loss of her dear friend, as we all are. Rest in peace💔

Jackie Brooks (Snickers) - July 30, 2022 at 11:35 PM