

MacAlpine Funeral Homes & Cremation Services

Irene Marsa

(May 14, 1913 - July 13, 2014)

Irene G. Marsa, 101, a former resident of Port Hope, Michigan, died July 13, 2014 in Carlsbad, California with her family by her side. A funeral service will be held on July 26th at MacAlpine Funeral Home in Bad Axe, Michigan. Visitation will be held from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., service at 11 a.m. Burial will take place at Colfax Cemetery with a luncheon following at the Franklin Inn in Bad Axe.



Irene was born May 14, 1913 in South Haven, Michigan to Walter and Gertrude Harry. She was raised on an 80 acre farm with her siblings, John, Lowell, Louise and Ione, often growing their own food to survive during the lean years. She attended McDowell Country School and graduated South Haven High School in 1930.

She attended Western Michigan University from 1930 to 1935 and received a BA in Education. Shortly thereafter, she began teaching at a consolidated school in Ewart, Michigan.

While attending a teacher's mixer at Michigan State University, she met Lee A. Marsa, a fellow teacher. They wed on June 25, 1938 at her parent's farm in South Haven. The couple then moved to their first home in St. Joseph, Michigan.

Irene and Lee welcomed a daughter, Susan Lee, into the world on September 14, 1940. A son, Blaine Roy, followed a few years later on March 23, 1944. When Lee went to China as part of the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) efforts in that country following World War II, Irene cared for her two young children alone until Lee returned.

In 1948, the family moved to a 120-acre farm in Port Hope, Michigan, where they raised cattle and grain. Over the years, Irene and Lee expanded the successful farm to 240 acres. Irene resumed teaching at The Red School, a country school in Port Hope, and then accepted a position teaching 5th grade at Bad Axe Elementary School from which she retired in 1973. Lee passed away in 1980, after which Irene managed the farm until 2004.

Irene was a volunteer at the Bad Axe Historical Society throughout the 1980s and 1990s, contributing to the success of events such as Log Cabin Days. She enjoyed traveling, visiting Hawaii, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Irene enjoyed spending time with her friends and family and was prolific in her correspondence with them. She loved going to the mailbox to send and receive letters almost every day. Irene moved to Rhinebeck, New York in 2004 to live with her

daughter Susan and her family. In 2006, she relocated to the Brookdale Place in San Marcos, California, under the care of her son Blaine and his wife, Rita and their family.

She is survived by her son Blaine and his wife, Rita of Encinitas, California; her daughter, Susan, of Rhinebeck, New York; two granddaughters, Gretchen Lee Marsa and Carolyn Marie Marsa of Encinitas, California; a grandson, Gregory Platkin and his wife Jennifer of Kingston, New York, as well as numerous nephews and nieces. She was preceded in death by her husband, Lee; brothers John and Lowell and sisters Louise and Ione.

In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made in Irene's name to the Bad Axe Schools or to the Bad Axe Historical Society.

Condolences may be shared at www.macalpinefuneralhome.com