



Mary A. Hartard

July 22, 1926 - September 15, 2025

Mary A. (Bensman) Hartard passed away quietly at 7:10 p.m. on Monday, September 15th, 2025 at Mercy Health – St. Rita’s Medical Center, Lima with family by her side.

Mary was born July 22, 1926 on her parent’s farm in Shelby County. She was the daughter of Julius and Celia (Hoying) Bensman, who preceded her in death. She married James A. Hartard on November 25, 1948 and he passed away August 15, 1995.

Survivors include three daughters. Joan (Mike) Waterman and Sandra (Joe) Berg, both of Wapakoneta and Elaine (Bill-Deced.) Ruese of Kernersville, North Carolina. Eight grandchildren: Todd Waterman, Kelly (Eric) Steinke and Andy Waterman; Christine (Dominic) Dattilo, Tony (Danille) Berg, Greg (Sarah) Berg and Kevin (Joy) Ruese and Sara Ruese. The grandchildren enjoyed sleepovers and trips to McDonalds and the theater and especially their first plane flight to Florida and Disneyworld with their grandma. She also had fourteen great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild who would bring a smile to her face whenever they were around.

Mary was preceded in death by her brothers, sisters and in-laws: Urban & Katie Bensman, Rita and Ralph (Madalyn) Bornhorst, Wilfred & Marty Bensman, Teresa & Roger Bornhorst, Joan & Paul Willenborg.

Mary graduated from Anna High School, Anna and worked in Dayton until her marriage. She babysat in her home until her three girls were in school and then, upon a suggestion from her neighbor, she took a job tailoring men’s and

women's clothing at Zofkie's Clothing which later became Jeannine Zofkie's Bridal. After many years she took a job down the street at the Bridal Emporium and retired from there after more than forty years helping brides fit into the gown of their dreams. She was an accomplished seamstress tackling any project that came her way.

After moving from her long-time Pearl Street residence across the street to her Logan Street residence she was awarded the "2001 Most Improved Residential Property" by the Wapakoneta Chamber of Commerce having completed much of the work at that residence herself along with her children and their spouses and grandchildren. She was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church, Wapakoneta.

Mary will be remembered as a loving mother, a kind soul, a sharp dresser, a lover of animals and someone who could never say "no" to any request. She would often be seen taking a walk through the neighborhood.

In keeping with Mary's wishes, there will be no public showing. A private family service with interment following at St. Joseph Cemetery will be scheduled at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be directed to St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Special thanks to the Staff at Wapak Manor and the Doctors and Nurses at St. Rita's.

The family has entrusted Eley Funeral Home & Crematory, Wapakoneta to handle the arrangements. Condolences may be expressed at www.eleyfuneralhomeandcrematory.com.

Cemetery Details

St. Joseph Cemetery

Wapakoneta, OH 45895

Tribute Wall

TD

“ *Our sincere sympathy to Sandy and all the Hartard family. May the Lord hug you, hold you and comfort you. Hugs and Prayers Tammy & Ed Danner*

Tammy Danner - September 18, 2025 at 12:42 PM

DS

“ *My sincere sympathies to Sandy, Joan and Elaine. Your Mother was so nice to us (Peggy Hepp, Debbie Klienhenz, Deb Zwieble and myself) when we would stop by to hang out with Sandy. We always felt welcome. May your Mother have eternal rest in heaven. Sincerely, Dolly (Madison) Sharp*

Dolly Sharp - September 17, 2025 at 07:23 PM

JK

“ *If you were lucky enough to have Mary assist you with your wedding dress you were lucky enough!!!! What a gem. From start to finish she made me feel special. As if I was her first bride. She even made the trip to Holy Trinity Church in Coldwater to make sure everything was perfect before I walked down the isle. Above and beyond. Totally Mary and Bridal Emporium. An art lost today. Mary was one special lady. Jackie (Miller) Knapke*

Jackie Miller Knapke - September 17, 2025 at 10:30 AM