

# Madeline Harriet

Aug. 6, 1924 – Nov. 18, 2019



Madeline Harriet was born in Buffalo, Wyoming on August 6, 1924 to John Pierre Iberlin and Jeanne Etchemendy Iberlin. She remained a lifelong resident of Johnson County, living two blocks from the house where she was raised. She attended Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa. After returning to Buffalo she was employed by the Johnson County Assessor. The stint in the assessor's office sparked a lifelong interest in who owned real property in the county. During the bitter winter of 1949 she married Simon U. Harriet and they operated the UB sheep company for the next 40 years. She and Barbonne raised three children, Madeleine, Mary Agnes and Phillip.

Madeline was an excellent cook and fed countless bowls of soup and homemade bread to family, friends, and anyone who came to the house at mealtimes. She was not a fancy cook, but her "soup kitchen" was worthy of at least two Michelin stars. Her children grew up with a healthy respect for pressure cookers, not only did the vessels cook garbanzos just right, but her pressure cooker was prone to explosions given the right conditions. Madeline exploded too, given the right conditions.

Madeline was an active member of several organizations. She served on the school board, Johnson County predatory animal board, Wyoming Wool Growers, the Buffalo Music Club and was an election judge. She kept her finger on the pulse of the community with her civic involvement.

Her interest in Johnson County history and status as a lifelong county resident made her a fantastic reference source for people researching history and the Basques in Johnson County. She was very knowledgeable about the Basque families and the Basque culture in the area. She would clarify any misinformation and misconceptions that people may have had, usually in no uncertain terms.

Madeline was an avid bridge player. She outlived the original foursome with whom she played, but was always able to gather another player to fill the void. She played cards weekly until she was 93. A gambler at heart she loved a good poker game and other games of chance. A trip to Deadwood to play three card poker kept her young and craving the big win. She also enjoyed MUS a Basque card game that was played nearly every Sunday after dinner at her house on Fort Street.

Madeline and Barbonne loved a good party. She thoroughly enjoyed dancing and Barbonne was her best partner. Her favorite high ball was a Crown Royal ditch. She will be remembered as a music lover and great dancer. She sang in the church choir and with the Buffalo Music club in their annual Christmas concert for many years. All her children appreciate music because of her efforts to expose them to culture and Mrs. Knowlton's piano lessons.

Madeline and Barbonne owned and operated the Idlewild Hotel on main street for many years. The hotel was home to many Basque shepherders during the winter months and their time in town. The herders who stayed there for any length of time became fast friends of the family.

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Madeline loved her afternoon drives usually starting and ending with a “drag down main” to see what was going on in her hometown. Even as a resident of Amie Holt she rarely missed an outing or a trip around the country-side. She had a great deal of input as to the route they travelled.

Madeline Harriet left an indelible mark on her family and friends. She will be sorely missed. She is survived by her three children, Madeleine Pitsch, husband Pete, Mary Agnes Torske, and Phillip, 9 grandchildren, 11 great-grand children and 2 great-great grandchildren. She is also survived by her two siblings Mary Louise Arambel, Johnny and Maggie Iberlin, Sister in law Dollie Iberlin and several nieces and nephews. She leaves behind a fan club of extended family and close friends --she was a real rock star and knew everyone in the county!

Funeral services will be held on Saturday November 30 at 10:00a.m. at Saint John the Baptist Catholic church in Buffalo. A rosary is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. Friday November 29th, at the Harness Funeral Home. Memorial donations can be made to St. John the Baptist Catholic church, the Johnson County Historical Museum or any charity of your choice.

The family would sincerely like to thank all who cared for, visited with and were friends of Madeline during these past years as her health failed. Thank you to her doctors, nurses and aides that worked with Madeline when she was hospitalized. The staff at Agape Assisted Living and the wonderful staff at the Amie Holt Nursing Home deserve a special thank you for all their hard work and truly compassionate care of Madeline. Eskerrit asko. (Thank You)