Karen Marlene Bankey

September 17, 1939 - March 13, 2026

Karen Marlene Bankey, 86, of Napoleon, Ohio passed away peacefully on Friday, March 13, 2026, at Woodhaven Health Care under the care of Hospice of Northwest Ohio, with family by her side. Karen was born on September 17, 1939, in Defiance, Ohio to the late Harvey and Edna (Burill) Rettig. She was a 1957 graduate of Holgate High School. Karen met Gene Bankey at the Henry County Fair, and they married on June 8, 1957.

Karen was a stay-at-home mom for many years enjoying sewing, baking, and babysitting. As her children grew older, she began working part time outside of the home, at Campbell's Research Center and selling Avon. In the early 80's, she became a sales representative for Western & Southern Life Insurance until her retirement in 2001.

She enjoyed camping, dining out, photography, scrapbooking, flower gardening, and talking to others. No one was a stranger. Throughout the years, she liked traveling to many places. Her favorite being to visit the Upper Peninsula, Soo Locks, Whitefish Point and Crisp Point. Spending time with her family, especially the grandsons, gave her the greatest pleasure of all.

Karen is survived by her children, Deb Bankey of Toledo, Jeff Bankey of Clear Lake, IN, Pam (Gary) Rutenbar of Sault Sainte Marie, MI, and Kirk (Cara) Bankey of Swanton; grandchildren, Chandler, Keegan, Andy and Jayden; and

brother Gary (Barb) Rettig. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Gene; granddaughter, Brittany; and sister, Judy Paull.

Friends and family will be received at the Rodenberger-Gray Funeral Home, Napoleon, on Thursday, March 19, 2026, from 4:00 PM until 7:00 PM. Funeral services will be held on Friday, March 20, 2026 at St. John United Church of Christ, Holgate, at 11:00 AM with an hour of visitation prior to services. Interment will follow in the church cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Hospice of Northwest Ohio, St. Paul United Methodist Church, or St. John United Church of Christ. Online condolences and messages may be shared with the family at rodenbergergray.com.

Cemetery Details

St. John's UCC Cemetery

13063 County Road J
Holgate, OH 43527

Previous Events

Public Viewing

MAR **19**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Rodenberger Funeral Home - Napoleon
1010 Westmoreland Avenue
Napoleon, OH 43545

Public Viewing

MAR **20**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. John's United Church of Christ
I-946 St. Route 108
Holgate, OH 43527

Funeral Service

MAR **20**. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. John's United Church of Christ
I-946 St. Route 108
Holgate, OH 43527

Tribute Wall

JS

So sorry to hear of your Mom's passing. She will be remembered as one of the great neighbor ladies, and raised a wonderful family. May she enjoy eternal rest with The Lord above!
Sincerely, Jan and John Stover

Jan Stover - March 19 at 01:06 PM

LM

Linda M. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Karen Marlene Bankey.

Linda M. - March 19 at 10:39 AM

PN

Paul & Jill Nastas purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Karen Marlene Bankey.

Paul & Jill Nastas - March 18 at 09:09 AM

TL

The Link Transactions Team & Lamont purchased the Pink Potpourri Bouquet for the family of Karen Marlene Bankey.

The Link Transactions Team & Lamont - March 17 at 09:03 AM

TL

The Link Transactions Team & Lamont planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Karen Marlene Bankey.

The Link Transactions Team & Lamont - March 17 at 09:03 AM

JR

I first want to extend my deepest condolences to Karen's family. I met Karen in the fall of 2025 at Woodhaven, and I have so many wonderful memories with her.

One of my favorites happened around 9:30 in the morning when she told me, "I'm pretty hungry." I smiled and asked what she wanted, and she said, "Ice cream would be pretty good." So, I got her ice cream.

Some of the things I will miss the most include walking into her room and being greeted with a smile and a wave; there was just something special about her smile and the way she waved. I will also miss her lifting her head up so our foreheads would touch. Finally, I loved how I would walk up to her and she would look at me and say, "There's my boy." She also would come up to me very slowly then throw her feet up on my leg.

It was a blessing to know Karen as well as her family. I can't even express how kind her family has been to me.

Sincerely,

Jackson Rankin.

Jackson Rankin - March 16 at 08:51 AM

BR

She was always very nice to me. Was pleasant to be around.
Barbara Ruch

Barb Ruch - March 15 at 08:28 PM