



## Wilma Ethel Cortright (nee: Modak)

June 23, 1923 - March 23, 2014

Age 90, died peacefully in her sleep at Linden Square Assisted Living Center in Saline, Michigan on Sunday, March 23, 2014. Wilma was born on June 23, 1923 in Detroit, Michigan, the daughter of the late Andrew Madak and Ethel (Bathory) Madak, Hungarian and Czech immigrants. The oldest of six children born within five calendar years, her childhood was scarred by abuse. When she was seven years old and after her mother's death, Wilma suffered a severe beating at the hands of her father resulting in a closed-head injury – her mental state was that of an 8-to-12-year-old for the rest of her life. Along with her younger brother, Andy, she was removed to the State Public School for Orphaned Children in Coldwater, Michigan where “basic skills” were taught. At the time, Wilma spoke no English and was permitted no contact with her beloved little brother. As an adult, Wilma held domestic jobs in Coldwater until her marriage to Donald Cortright in 1951. She continued as a homemaker and wife for 48 years before Don's death in 1999, living in Battle Creek and Monroe, Michigan. They had no children, and her married life contained little happiness. Still, she tried hard to maintain relationships with her siblings and their families and her many, many friends. Since her husband's death, Wilma's niece, Denise Kantner, lovingly and capably cared for Wilma and enabled her to have some fun. A condo in Florida next door to her brother, Andy, family reunions, limousine rides, casinos, dinner theatre on trains, dinner cruises on the Detroit River, front row seats to Broadway shows, the Radio City Rockettes, and Donny and Marie (her favorites – they both

hugged her) – the last 15 years of Wilma’s life were an attempt to make up for the first 75. Childlike herself, Wilma loved children, animals (especially cats), and being outdoors. Wilma was a physically pretty woman (she rarely missed an appointment at the beauty shop), but her inner spirit was even more so. Despite her simplicity, her kindness and generosity were magnets – sometimes to her detriment at the hands of opportunists. A surprise celebration of Wilma’s life was held last summer, attended by family and true friends from everywhere. She enjoyed herself immensely, eating, drinking and visiting, and she kept the scrapbook of the occasion in a place of honor. Wilma is survived by her sisters, Irene Silverman, of Grant, MI, Bette Leestma of Artesia, CA, and Rachel Pearson of Eu Fala, AL; and brother, Mike Modak, of Potter, NB; also many nieces and nephews. Her adored pet of two years, Kitty, is safely in a new home. In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by her sister, Mary, and her brothers, Andrew Modak, Bert Henderson and Alex Modak. The family wishes to thank Charlotte and Dale Bolton for their many years of compassion and tenderness, and Precious In-Home Care, Linden Square Assisted Living Center and Arbor Hospice for their care and support these past months. Cremation has taken place. To sign Wilma’s guestbook, to leave a memory, or for more information or directions please visit [www.rbfhsaline.com](http://www.rbfhsaline.com).

# Tribute Wall



“ *Wilma Ethel Cortright (nee: Modak)*

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October 23, 2023 at 01:07 PM



“ *Denise and Perry,*

*We were so sorry to hear about the passing of Aunty Wilma. I know she benefitted greatly from the time and care you provided to her over the last 15 years. She is so lucky to have family members like the both of you who at all times put her needs above your own. We can only hope that when it is our time, we will be lucky enough to have family members care for us in this manner. We look forward to your sharing more of your Aunty Wilma memories the next time we see you. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to call!*

*Love,  
Lem and Kristy*

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**Kristy Nash** - March 25, 2014 at 08:01 PM