



Ilo N. Clifford
September 18, 1911 - March 14, 2009
Highlights of Ilo's Life From A to Z



A	On September 18, 1911 the letter A changed the way Ilo would be known to the world. Ila was Harve & Ada's name of choice for their second daughter. The doctor, however, misread the a for an o. Ilo Norine was welcomed into the Riebling and Stauffer families.
B	Ilo's childhood was spent near Bader and Astoria, Illinois. She attended Crossroads School, a one-room schoolhouse, until 8 th grade. Missing numerous days of school due to illness, "Silo Ilo" had to repeat one grade. She fondly remembered riding the train with sister Velma to their Uncle Ira's house. The conductor would stop the train to drop them off near their destination, and the young girls would walk the remainder of the way. What fun they had playing with cousin Ida! Ilo loved to stay for days, but Velma got homesick. Consequently, Ilo preferred when her older sister stayed home! Ilo attended Bader High School for 2 years before finishing her education at Astoria High School. Since this school was 5 miles from home, Ilo lived with Uncle Harry Riebling until she graduated in 1929.
C	Around 1930, Ilo moved to the Chicago area to be a housekeeper and caretaker for a family in LaGrange, IL. Traveling on a Greyhound bus, Ilo left her rural home and headed to the city. Unfortunately, she got off the bus too early and was quite a distance from her destination. With just an address and her suitcase, she walked and walked! Ilo married Leslie Mahar in 1932. While living in Chicago, Ilo also worked at the Bunte Candy Company and later at an Ekco factory making supplies for World War II. Ilo met Ed Clifford while working at Ekco and they married in 1950. From 1946 until 1975, Ilo worked for Illinois Bell. As a switchboard operator, she received the Vail Citation on January 27, 1960. Ilo was credited for saving a 5 year old girl from her burning home by keeping the young child on the operator line until rescue personnel arrived. During Ilo's Chicago years, her young nieces and nephews remember her as the "city aunt" who wore nice clothes and high heels! As children, they looked forward to riding the train to Chicago to visit their Aunt Ilo.
D	Ilo loved to drive . Not many people who rode with Ilo didn't comment about her driving afterwards, however! Squealing tires and careening around corners were her "specialty." Maybe Ilo's driving habits stemmed from a childhood experience. During Ilo's very young years, her mother was driving a buggy carrying brother Harold, sister Velma, and young Ilo. The horse became spooked by a passing Ford and took off running! The runaway horse and buggy were eventually stopped. Everyone was shaken by the near disaster, especially Ilo. In fact, when asked if she was all right, Ilo claimed that her neck was broken! Ilo was known for just popping in to visit friends and family. Wherever her car led her, she would go! At 96, Ilo made the difficult decision to give up driving and sell her car. It was her intent to start taking taxi cabs, but with much reluctance she allowed her family and friends to chauffeur her around Pekin.
E	EvelynIlo's dear sister and best friend. Evelyn fondly remembers sister Velma as a "mother," but Ilo as her "protector!" During their childhood years, Ilo rescued her young sister Evelyn from a locked bathroom! Lovingly known as "The Aunts," these two ladies shared many special times together. Evelyn remembers being Ilo's travel companion to Arizona to visit their sister Velma. Twice they traveled by plane to visit family in Washington. Their sisterly bantering and reminiscing always brought chuckles to those gathered at the holiday dinner tables. Evelyn recalls how kind and helpful Ilo always was to her. When Evelyn was recovering from an illness, Ilo brought her famous chicken soup to speed up the recovery process!
F	Five children were born to the Harve & Ada Riebling Stauffer family : Harold, Velma, Ilo, Galen, and Evelyn. The siblings shared a special relationship from childhood through their adult years. Ilo also enjoyed spending time with her cousins at annual Riebling Reunions. Ilo and her siblings were taught that family was important. In turn, they have passed that value down to the next generations.

G	Ilo was generous to those she knew and to those she would never meet. She was supportive of her church's needs and to those in time of personal need. While Ilo was always charitable, she never wanted any recognition for her work!
H	Hobbies were an important part of Ilo's life. Reading books and newspapers, completing crossword puzzles, baking pies and cookies, swimming at the YWCA, gardening, and crocheting topped the list! When living in Bellwood, IL, Ilo had a beautiful garden. When she couldn't get a thing to grow after moving to Pekin, she blamed it on the soil! Ilo was famous for crocheting beautiful afghans, hats, mittens, potholders, and slippers. Her family cherishes the many handmade gifts they have received over the years.
I	Ilo is the obvious choice here, but for those who knew and loved Ilo so well.... independent is far more appropriate! She never wanted to be a bother and often called herself the "pesky" aunt when she requested help. She always insisted on doing her own laundry and cooking. No microwave meals for her, though. A healthy diet of fresh produce and homemade recipes were always on the menu. Fellow residents at the high-rise often commented on the aromas coming from Ilo's apartment!
J	Ilo received great joy from spending time with children. After retiring and moving to Pekin, she had lots of opportunities to spend time with great nieces and nephews and great-great nieces and nephews. Great nieces and nephews fondly remember spending New Year's Eve at Aunt Ilo's house. Competing in the "flyswatter" game, playing on the sun porch, and drinking Sprite at midnight always made our time together special. Foil-wrapped chocolate eggs and "wheater" pennies made Easter memorable, too! For the young children in the family, Aunt Ilo was a favorite babysitter!
K	Ilo showed such kindness to others through volunteer efforts. She tutored in an adult literacy program, crocheted baby hats for distribution by the Council of Catholic Women, visited the sick and elderly, and organized books after mass at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. In addition, she frequently drove her dear friend to Oglesby, IL to visit a disabled son.
L	Ilo LOVED ice cream, especially butter pecan! On the top of her weekly grocery list was always two cartons of ice cream.....not lite or low fat! Sometimes those two cartons didn't last the week. Ilo's family often jokes that maybe the secret to her long life lies in ice cream!
M	Morning mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church was an important ritual for Ilo. Until recent years, she attended 7:00 mass almost every morning and often enjoyed breakfast with friends afterwards. Ilo was always thankful to her parish for bringing communion to the high-rise after she was unable to attend in person.
N	While Ilo did not have any biological children, she had numerous nieces and nephews : Arbutus, Ron, Wayne, Terry, Connie, John, Mary Ann, and Brad. Fifteen great nieces and nephews, and nineteen great-greats all thought the world of Aunt Ilo, too!
O	Among Ilo's favorite cookies were oatmeal raisin. She enjoyed both baking and eating them! She often commented that as soon as she saw the bottom of the cookie jar, she knew it was time to bake another batch! Her famous potato chip cookies were also a family favorite!
P	Ilo was well known for her pies . All-Good pie was always her brother Galen's request! Church friends smile when they remember how Ilo would always bake two raisin pies for the St. Joseph Bazaar each year.
Q	Ilo had a quick wit and a lot of spunk! She had a way of adding humor to conversations, often surprising others with her wit. Ilo frequently used humor to poke <u>fun at herself</u> , but never others.
R	Ilo was devoted to her religious beliefs. She was a very active member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Pekin, IL. Ilo enjoyed fellowship with other parishioners and often attended retreats in Henry, IL. She was an active member in the Council of Catholic Women and the Blue Circle. She dedicated much time to helping with the annual bazaar. Others always looked forward to Ilo's donations of cookies, pies, and crocheted items. Some of Ilo's closest friendships stemmed from her church family. Ilo was trustworthy, and her friends commented that "what you told Ilo, stayed with Ilo!"

S	We often wonder how many pairs of crocheted slippers Ilo made in her years. Christmas just wasn't Christmas without a new pair of handmade slippers and a \$10 dollar bill tucked inside! She often said that with a family as large as hers, she would start making slippers in January to be sure that she got them all done in time for the next holiday season! Great nieces and nephews fondly remember using the crocheted slippers as skates to slip and slide across linoleum and hardwood floors.
T	After retiring from Illinois Bell, Ilo moved to 1503 Terrace Boulevard so that she could be closer to family. The year was 1978 when she decided that Pekin would be a nice place to live because it was close to Harold, Galen & Rebecca, and Bud & Evelyn. Always the independent one, Ilo didn't want to burden her family with household maintenance. So when she felt that the time was right, she sold her home and downsized.
U	Ilo moved to the UAW Senior Citizen's Center in March 1997. She called #1107 home. Transitioning to a smaller space without a yard was an adjustment for her. Always the early riser, Ilo could often be found downstairs doing laundry at dawn! In recent years, Ilo looked forward to Thursday lunches in the high-rise restaurant.
V	Ilo enjoyed vacations in Wisconsin. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, fishing trips with Galen & Rebecca and Bud & Evelyn were highlights of Ilo's summer. One time while Ilo and Evelyn were fishing from a boat, Ilo was having trouble casting her line. Instead of casting into the water, she hooked her sister's hat!
W	Walking was an important form of exercise for Ilo. When she lived on Terrace Boulevard, she often walked several blocks to church and back. During family gatherings at the cabin, she enjoyed walking around the pond. Walking down the hill to County Market for groceries also provided fresh air and exercise. At 97 years of age, Ilo still liked to walk the halls of the high-rise and visit with neighbors. A healthy lifestyle was always important to Ilo. As one family member recalls, she was always "ahead of the curve."
X	Xanadu : an idyllic, beautiful place. Heaven is a beautiful place, and there's no doubt that is where Ilo is today!
Y	Ilo lived from 1911-2009. That's more than 97 years ! She saw the world progress from horse and buggy to automobile. She lived through times of depression and war. Ilo also saw firsthand how modern inventions changed the world. Eighteen different presidents served in office during Ilo's lifetime, too. Ilo was never ashamed of her age. In fact, she was extremely proud that she had lived the longest of any person on her family tree...and she frequently reminded others of the fact!
Z	Ilo had such zest for life! She was a loyal daughter, loving wife, special sister, generous aunt, and faithful friend. She will truly be missed!