



## Viola Louise (Story) Kearney Werlinger

November 5, 1928 - February 27, 2023

Viola Louise (Story) Kearney Werlinger was born in Sesser, Illinois on November 5, 1928 to parents Lewis Jackson Story and Bessie Elizabeth (Mitchell) Story. Viola passed away peacefully in her home, surrounded by family, on February 27, 2023 in Benton, Illinois.

Viola spent her early years in the Sesser area with her parents and siblings. She married Joel Bryant (J.B.) Kearney in 1948 and moved to West City, where they raised six daughters.

Viola was a passionate supporter of the Democratic Party and served as a Browning Township Election Judge in the 1970s and 1980s. She was “First Lady” of West City during her husband J.B.’s term as Mayor in the 1970s. When her children were young, Viola was active in the Washington Grade School PTA, and was a Brownie Scout Troop Leader. She was dedicated to veteran affairs and was a member of the American Legion Auxiliary in Benton, Illinois and Glendale, Arizona. Viola was recently inducted into the Daughters of The American Revolution through her paternal three-times great grandfather, Patriot Robert Page. Viola enjoyed spending time with family, and was happiest when around her children and grandchildren. She was a lover of warm weather and the outdoors. She enjoyed travel, her cats and was a master of jigsaw and word puzzles. Viola lived in Glendale, Arizona for several years in the 1990s. There she met her second husband Adam Werlinger. Viola and Adam returned to West City, Illinois in 1994 where she lived out the

remainder of her life.

Viola was preceded in death by her parents Lewis and Bessie Story and husbands J.B. Kearney and Adam Werlinger. She was also preceded by her siblings Goldie Hazel Story Reiger, Robert Houston Story, Lucille Marie Story, Effie Evelyn Story Watkins, James Leroy Story, Charles William Irvin Story, Pat Lonzo Story and her great granddaughter Makanda Jaide Williams. Viola is survived by her six daughters and their families; Ramona Kearney, Christine Kearney and husband David, Kay Kearney, Rebecca Kearney Benedict and husband Kenny, Donna Kearney Smith and husband Troy, Jane Kearney and fiancé Mark Simpson. She is also survived by her grand children Joel Perry, Emily Kearney, Sarah Williams Carlton, Ashley Kearney, Lonnie Mann III, Dylan Kearney, Miles Williams, Chelsea Benedict Zettler, Chloe Benedict Knolhoff, Macy Kearney and Delaney Kearney. Additionally, Viola leaves twelve great-grandchildren and one brother, Lewis Jackson (John) Storey, of Centralia, IL.

A graveside service will be held at Masonic and Odd Fellows Cemetery in Benton at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 4, 2023 for the family and friends of Viola. . In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Hospice of Southern Illinois, Inc. through their website at <https://hospice.org/donate/> or by check to Hospice of Southern Illinois, 305 South Illinois Street, Belleville, IL 62220. The Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home at 235 North Sycamore Street in Centralia, Illinois 62801 (618) 532-3523, is honored to be of service to the Werlinger family. Online condolences may be made to the family by visiting [www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com](http://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com) or the Funeral Home's Facebook page.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

MAR 4. 11:00 AM (CT)

Masonic and Odd Fellows Cemetery  
12740 Oddfellow Ln  
Benton, IL 62812-6641  
(618) 435-2256

# Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Viola Louise (Story) Kearney Werlinger.



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February 28, 2023 at 09:08 PM



“ *Mom will be dearly missed and in our hearts forever. Our thanks go to Judy, Mike, John and team for the loving care given to mom and our family during this difficult time. I know she is smiling down from Heaven on each one of us right now* 💕💕

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**K Kearney** - February 28, 2023 at 07:39 PM