

## Rita Rose Lyons

**ROCK ISLAND** - Services for **Rita Rose Lerch Lyons**, 62, of 3403 35th Ave., will be 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Pius X Catholic Church, Rock Island. Burial will be in Calvary Cemetery, Rock Island.

Visitation will be 6-9 p.m. today, with an 8:30p.m. wake service at Wheelan Funeral Home, Rock Island.

Mrs. Lyons died Wednesday at CGH Medical Center, Sterling, after a one-vehicle accident on Illinois 88 near Rock Falls.



Mrs. Lyons

She had taught in Rock Island schools and in earlier years had worked in the engineering department at Deere & Co.

Rita Rose Lerch married Frank Lyons in 1957 in Rock Island.

She was a 1951 graduate of the former Marycrest College, Davenport, and had attended St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind.

She was an officer of Marycrest College Alumnae Association, was elected to Kappa Gamma Pi National Honor Society for graduates of Catholic women's colleges, and was a member of Villa de Chantal Alumnae Association and Chapter JI, PEa Sisterhood, Rock Island.

She was a member of the church and its Altar and Rosary Society and had been a Eucharistic minister and past president of the parish council.

She was an officer and served on the board of the Junior Auxiliary of the Rock Island Visiting Nurses Association, the Illowa Orchid Society, the Questers Antique Club and Col. Davenport Foundation. She helped to organize the Pioneer River Living Festival at Rock Island Arsenal.

She was widely known as an outdoor gardener and for her prize-winning orchids. She won awards for her floral displays at local and regional orchid competitions. She also traveled extensively and was an expert on antiques, especially Irish Belleek China.

Memorials may be made to the church, Alleman High School or Col. Davenport Foundation.

Survivors include her husband; a daughter, Kathleen (Mrs. David) Tabak, Barrington, Ill; a son, John E. Chicago; a grandson; and a sister, Joan Lerch, Rock Island.

12C - QUAD-CITY Times, FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 1992

*The wine of life  
flowed through  
her veins.*

In Loving Memory of  
**RITA ROSE LERCH LYONS**

wife of  
FRANK W. LYONS  
mother of  
KATHLEEN E. TABAK and JOHN E. LYONS  
grandmother of  
JOSEPH LYONS TABAK  
sister of  
JOAN K. LERCH  
mother-in-law of  
DAVID J. TABAK

**DATE of BIRTH**  
January 14, 1930, Rock Island, Illinois

**DATE of DEATH**  
June 24, 1992, Sterling, Illinois

**PLACE and TIME of SERVICE**  
St. Pius X Catholic Church  
Rock Island, Illinois  
Saturday, June 27, 1992 - 10:00 a.m.

**OFFICIATING CLERGYMEN**  
Rev. Raymond J. Boyle  
Pastor, St. Pius X Catholic Church  
and Rev. Thomas R Miller

**INTERMENT**  
Calvary Cemetery, Rock Island, Illinois

**PALLBEARERS**  
Don Lerch      Pat Lyons      Jack Lyons  
Bob Chaney      Gene Lyons      Tom Lyons

**RITA'S PASSING**  
January 14, 1930-June 24, 1992

(by Robert F. Lyons, Cambridge)

Greetings: Dear family and friends! Our family comes together once again to perform these ancient rites of passage. I am Bob Lyons, Frank's younger brother from Cambridge, Massachusetts. When Frank asked me if I would speak a few words for the family, I immediately said "Yes", but I also immediately felt some trepidation in the face of such a challenge. But I take comfort in Rita's spirit and with the support of my family expect that I will be able to muddle through this.

In our tradition these gatherings are the last occasion when the living and the recently departed can enjoy each other's company;" So it is especially fitting that our sister Rita should have a suitable send off by us who have so enjoyed life with her. For Frank, John, Kathy & Dave & Joey, and Joan, along with my brothers and our spouses, the Lyons, the Lerch and Tabak families--we thank you for joining us today. We invite all of you, family and friends, to a luncheon after this service at Farrell Hall here at St. Pius Church.

Quitting time has come unexpectedly early for Rita-- *The breath of God has carried out--a planned but entirely too swift withdrawal from this land.* (Lowell.) *We take her joys and bear the sorrows--*(Browning). *Rita will / Fear no more the heat of the sun,! Nor the furious winter's rages; / Her worldly tasks are done, Have act gone and taken her wages.* (Shakespeare)

Our memories of Rita are vibrant and varied. And all of you last night helped create a kaleidoscopic sketch of Rita: the orchid people, the sewing and quilting people; the bridge-no bridge people who as best I can figure out gather to eat select deserts; the Marycrest College group and childhood chums; the school teachers and the Colonel Davenport House and Pius X people; the Heidelberg and Deere & Co. people, the shopping and gossiping people. She would have been impressed and tickled I think with our group art project. The tag line on the finished portrait will be what one of her friends whispered into my ear: "We're going to miss that rascal."

When Frank brought Rita to our family farm in Yankton, South Dakota for that first visit with country in-laws she was about to acquire, we were a family of six boys and one girl and one sister-in-law. So we welcomed the prospect of improving the gender balance. Rita sported a pony tail in those days. I remember how swiftly she blended in with her new country kin and charmed our hearts with her lively ways. After that first night on the farm, we gathered for our usual hearty breakfast on the summer porch and cautiously surveyed Rita's reactions to her new country surroundings. She told us she had slept reasonably well, but was puzzled at the racket which punctuated the stillness of the night. So as we passed the platter for another helping of that good South Dakota slab bacon, we discreetly glanced at each other around the table, trying to figure out what it was that kept Rita awake. Then she said: "there it is again"! At that we all burst into laughter when we recognized the familiar clang and banging of the hog feeder as the hogs lifted--and dropped--the tin covers for another mouthful of good ground grain. My dad gave immediate instructions for the hog feeders to be pulled away some distance from the house

for the duration of Rita's stay.

Rita is a well known world class traveler and widely noted for her prowess as a shopper in all the great markets of the globe; but she loved Chicago the most. When another seasoned traveler once tried to convince her that Harrods's in London was surely the best and finest store in the whole wide world, Rita would brook no opposition to her opinion that Marshall Fields was the only store to fit that description.

My brother Tom recalls a holiday season in Chicago with Frank and Rita when she spent eight consecutive hours in Marshall Fields, +that's all in one day-s-and did not make a single purchase or spend one dollar. Frank and Tom's energies had long been dissipated, but by sunset, Rita was eagerly planning the next day's shopping itinerary. But she certainly could spend wisely when the occasion called for it. When my then bachelor brother Tom, our Texas engineer, bought a house in Houston, he commissioned Rita to come down and furnish it. Kathy came along too. Tom gave Rita a signed check with four digits on it, and the first digit was a six. In a matter of days, Rita had the entire house furnished to Tom's complete satisfaction-and to ours when we visited.

She was a great bargainer, some might say, haggler in the open markets and vendor stalls. I recall vividly our visit to Heidelberg in 1965 when my mother, twin sister Susan, aunts Ann and Ruth and I stayed with Frank and Rita in their gorgeous home on Richard Wagner Strasse. Kathy was enrolled in school already. The first introduction to my nephew was in the sandbox behind their house where John was chirping away in German with a playmate. I escorted Rita on her morning rounds to the markets where she purchased the ingredients for yet another gourmet dinner and marveled as she bantered and negotiated with the shop keepers in German. She was our guide and tour director as she drove us in the big Volkswagen bus through the magnificent sights of Bavaria and the Black Forest. She knew the language and the culture and the history, giving us commentary as she went along. I remember a particularly beautiful stop on a winding road near a brook somewhere in the forests. Rita calmly recited the names of the flora and fauna and laid out a carefully prepared picnic consisting of things not yet familiar to this country boy's palette. After lunch we waded briefly in the cool brook waters and washed our faces. She got us all back on the bus and drove next over to show us mad King Louis' house.

Amid her orchids and her love of books and poetry, she believed that education and learning were important for all. Rita thought that merely having an open mind is nothing; the object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid (G K Chesterton). She was both practical and philosophical in her approach to life. Rita would have agreed with the philosopher who said that *a society which scorns excellence in plumbing. just because plumbing is a humble activity. =and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy. just because philosophy is an exalted activity. will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water* (J. Gardner). And Rita certainly held her theories and dispensed them as needed with great wit and grace.

Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success and enjoyment. When you do a thing, you do it with all your might. You put your whole soul into it and stamp it with your own personality. This was the Rita we knew and loved and will remember. To be with her was an event--a Celebration: whether in her home, with her family; in the classrooms of the Rock Island Public Schools, in her many faceted roles in the life of this Parish or on the banks of the Mississippi at the Colonel Davenport House. She was ever available to others to share and spark interests. Her veins were filled with the wine of life. She was everybody's buddy and friend.

We six Lyons brothers, Pat, Frank, Gene, Jack, Tom and Bob--with our spouses and brother-in-law, stand shoulder to shoulder again this morning--for the third time in less than a year to perform these same Passover rites. I do feel we are getting an overly generous exposure to the ultimate meaning of life. And if Its meaning eludes us at this moment, our family is nevertheless nourished with that special bond of affection sculptured from common grief and joy.

Rita is now at peace in that garden which is always in bloom. She has rejoined her mother, Rose and father Ed and so many other family members. And I am sure she has already given a hug and a kiss for us to those other recent emigres: our mother, Mary and twin sister Susan. When quitting time comes around for us, we will rejoin her for yet another exploration; and upon our arrival we shall expect to find her waiting, clipboard in hand, to lead us on an expedition to the nearest antiquarian book stores and shopping marts, --then on to the gardens to catch sight and scent of the wild daisies and orchids--and perhaps to hear the song of the meadowlark; And after a fine dinner, she will review with us her plans to redecorate and restore the halls of heaven in a contemporary motif.

*Auf Wiedersehen*, dear Rita--wife, mother, sister and buddy to us all. You better get cracking on the plans for our final reunion beyond these scarless skies. We'll all be there with you as soon as it happens.

St. Pius X Church + Rock Island, Illinois  
June 27, 1992

Robert F. Lyons, Cambridge, Massachusetts

FOR RITA

*-by Nona Lyons*

Teacher, mother, wife, friend,  
And questor:  
Of Redwing crocks,  
Butter churns,  
rings to charm a school-girl's heart: rare orchids  
or fine antiques.

A well-educated eye, a quickened tongue, a goodly  
laugh.

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There she was:  
Stating a view, launching a position, backing  
with vehement, flashing eye, her own strong ideas;

There she was transforming an apartment or a house,  
defining a new color scheme, raising rare orchids or money for a  
historical society;

There she was designing a quilt, making dinner,  
teaching a class, caring for a fine home, loving a new  
grandchild; cajoling the best out of everyone.

There she was funny, and sly, witty and sharp; always  
wonderfully kind:  
Being there.

She was always there.

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We here today are being here for her, with her.  
Just being here; but, taking with us forever some of her being.  
All of us, now, being Rita.

St. Pius X Church - Rock Island, Illinois  
June 27, 1992

Nona Lyons, Cambridge, Massachusetts