

Doris K. Blum
September 02, 1924 - March 17, 2015

Doris K. Blum, 90, of La Crosse, died on Tuesday, March 17, 2015, at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse after a short illness. She had been a resident of Hillview Health Care Center for the past five years.



Doris was born in Somerville, Texas on September 2, 1924, the daughter of Robert and Virginia (Riordan) Katterich. At the age of 3, her family moved to Louisiana where they operated a 40 acre farm. Doris grew up on the farm and graduated from Forest High School in northeast Louisiana in 1941. While at Forest, she was a star second baseman on the Forest High School softball team. She picked cotton, drove a mule, and raised vegetables for the family in a large garden patch. Her love of gardening was a passion, and lifelong.

Doris also loved animals. No bird, squirrel, or rabbit ever went hungry if they came into the Blum family back yard. At the age of 7, she was knocked over backwards by the recoil of her father's shotgun as she tried to shoot and invading chicken hawk. During World War II, Doris worked as a blue print operator at a Navy shipyard in Orange, Texas. Following the war, she was office manager for a bus, cab, and auto sales company in Orange. In 1949, when the bus company closed, she worked as a blue print operator for Strand Steel Co. of Houston, Texas.

In the early part of World War II, Doris married Rufus Voight, a neighbor. He was later killed in Korea in 1950. At some point, she met a truck driver from Ettrick, Wis., and married him. They moved to Ettrick in 1965, but the marriage was not a happy one and they were divorced in 1969. Doris was unwilling to part with her 13 year old dog at that time. She kept looking for apartments until she found one in Holmen that allowed pets. She moved next door to Grant Blum. Grant became friends with the dog and then Doris. They began dating and were married on July 5, 1970, in New Glarus, Wis., where Grant's ancestors were original settlers, a Swiss community. Doris loved her honeymoon trip to Switzerland and Austria.

For the first time, Doris had a chance to be a stay at home housewife. She loved to garden, and when the seed catalogs arrived, she was like a child in a toy store. She bought enough seeds and plants for a 108 by 155 foot garden. She filled our large freezer each fall. Being a southern girl, she raised many crops traditional to the south and cooked southern dishes.

Doris also loved politics. She loved to go with Grant on many of his out of town assignments for the La Crosse Tribune. She drove and sometimes was a witness during sensitive interviews. She met every governor of Wisconsin from Patrick Lucey to Tommy Thompson. She met President Jimmy Carter on his Delta Queen Riverboat trip and saw President George H.W. Bush speak in Rochester, Minn., as well as President Gerald Ford in La Crosse. When Grant interviewed Alabama Governor George Wallace on a presidential campaign stop in La Crosse, Doris was there. When Gov. Wallace learned Doris was a southerner, he was much more at ease. She loved her title, "Deputy Dog", for her help on out of town assignments.

In 2009, while in Rochester, Minn., Doris suffered a major stroke. She was admitted to Hillview Health Care Center where she spent more than five years. Doris and Grant will always appreciate the care and love Doris received at Hillview.

Doris was preceded in death by her parents; a sister, Ruby Pody, and brother-in-law, Johnson Pody, and a nephew, Jack Williamson, all of West Monroe, La. She is survived by her husband, Grant; niece, Bobby Ann Williamson of West Monroe, La.; great nieces, Kelly Williamson of West Monroe, La., and Rayne Williamson Lowder of Eros, La.; great nephew, Dr. Gary Lowder of Eros, La.; great, great nephews, Jackson and Garrison Lowder of Eros, La.; and special friends, Ruby Carlisle of Houston, Texas, and Shane and Liza Collins of Holmen, Wis.

Funeral services will be held at 4:00 p.m., on Tuesday, March 24th, at Schumacher-Kish Funeral and Cremation Services, 200 West Ave. So., La Crosse. Pastor Daniel Habegger will officiate. Burial will take place in the Highland Cemetery in Monticello, Wis., at a later date. Friends may call from 3:00 p.m. until the time of service on Tuesday at the funeral home. Online condolences may be submitted at www.schumacher-kish.com. Memorials may be directed to the Coulee Region Humane Society, 911 Critter Ct., Onalaska, Wis., 54650.