



## Gertrude Craddock

October 30, 1932 - September 8, 2019

Gertrude LöwHeinl Craddock, 86, from Weir, KS, passed away September 8, 2019, surrounded by loved ones, to include her dog, Scotty, in her home in Mt. Pleasant, SC. She spent the past nine months recovering from age-related fractures and a brief illness under the care of her daughter and son-in-law, Kevin, who was also her doting caregiver.

Gertrud Löw was born October 30, 1932, to Anna Schuster Löw and Josef Löw in Nebonice, Czech Republic, Egerland (Sudetenland). She spent the early years of her childhood forced into Bund DeutscherMädel of Hitler Youth and was tragically orphaned at the age of nine; unexpectedly separated from her brothers and stepfather, Gertrude was transported on a cattle car from Bohemia, during the annexation of ethnic Germans from Sudetenland, and relocated to the new territory of the Third Reich, eventually settling in what is now Bavaria.

Gertrude tried to make light of her very difficult childhood, telling tales of her escape from Catholic nuns, being punished for failed attempts to salute “der Führer” as he rode past her orphanage, and spraying “certain German Shepherds” with water hoses. She spent many years as a child under forced labor harvesting potatoes in what she described as “beautiful fields.” Gertrude was never a victim, always a survivor.

During her late teens, Gertrude was reunited with her brothers, Horst and Georg, stepfather and stepmother, while living in Nürnberg with her close friend, Hilde, and Hilde’s parents. Gertrude was a shy, strikingly beautiful young woman who avoided compliments and any attention she did not willingly seek. During her daily walks throughout Bad Hersfeld, Gertrude found that trekking miles out of the way to avoid men whistling at her from the rooftops, was a better alternative than embarrassment. Eventually, she mustered the courage to accompany her friend to the nearby US Army Officer’s club where she met her future husband, Gary Craddock, a young soldier hoping to impress a local Fräulein. Gertrude often described her courtship with Gary stating the father figure with whom she lived, Dr. Keberich, “did not like Americans” and sent Gary away three times when he called upon her for a date. It was the fourth attempt that won over the host family as well as Gertrude. They married July 4, 1955, in Bad Hersfeld, and had twin boys and their

oldest daughter while living in Germany. These were the happiest years of Gertrude's life.

During most of Gary's Army career, Gertrude was left to raise their children alone. German was Gertrude's sole language when she first arrived in the US, but over time learned enough English to function on the various Army bases where Gary was assigned. As an Officer's wife, Gertrude served the role well, ensuring a spotless home and frequently hosting dinners for high-ranking officials and their wives, while still managing to be a loving, attentive mother. Gertrude was proud of her ability to successfully run a busy household and make her husband shine through her work behind the scenes.

After Gary's retirement from the Army in 1974, he and Gertrude settled their family, now with their fourth child, and youngest daughter, in Gary's hometown of Weir, Kansas, where Gertrude made her home. All who knew Gertrude expected a pristine house, surrounded by flourishing wildlife and beautiful flowers with mouth-watering "German cooking" readily available to any and all who wandered into her home.

Gertrude most enjoyed her early morning walks in the fields, sometimes making 10-mile-a-day journeys. Her motto was: *Morgenstund hat Gold imMund*. Gertrude loved walking into Simone's IGA, Citizens Bank of Weir, and the Post Office, to visit friends in her social circle. She loved the people of Weir and they loved her back.

Gertrude was full of life, strong-willed, yet a gentle soul, who forever attempted to hide the wounds of her traumatic childhood. She was thoughtful and kind, with an occasional fit of "German temper" and cherished any gift given during the holidays. Her true joy came from spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren—she loved babies and redheads. *Wir werden dich immer lieben*. With the loss of Gertrude, comes great grief to all, and another significant part of world history gone; however, her life was full and fond memories of her will forever remain.

She is survived by beloved daughters Mary Craddock Luebke (Dennis), Phillipsburg, MO; Melissa Craddock McDonough (Kevin), Mt. Pleasant, SC, a brother, Horst Heint (Edith), Bingen am Rhein, Germany, and his two adult children, Ulrich Heint, Frankfurt, Germany, and Patrick Heint (Saskia), Mainz, Germany. She was a loving grandmother to her grandchildren: Dustee Craddock Harrison (Scott), McCune, KS; Janna Craddock Baker (Darrell), Altamont, KS; Brandon Craddock (Megan), Girard, KS; Brandee Craddock Dunham, Coffeyville, KS; Tiffany Hanoch (Branden), Girard, KS, Emily Pline, Pittsburg, KS, and Joseph Pline, Lebanon, MO; Garek Stanley (Brittany), Mt. Pleasant, SC; many adored great-grandchildren and former sons-in-law, Randy Stanley, Mt. Pleasant, SC, and D.J. Pline, Lebanon, MO; former daughter-in-law, Brenda Turner Craddock, Girard, KS; and, her best friend, Patricia Lollar, Mulvane, KS.

Gertrude was preceded in death by her husband, Gary Craddock, twin sons, Robert (Bob) Craddock (Rachell) and Thomas (Tom) Craddock (Brenda); mother, Anna Schuster LöwHeinl, father, Josef Löw, stepfather, August Heinl, and brother, Georg Heinl.

Public graveside services will be held at Fort Scott National Cemetery, 900 E. National Ave, Fort Scott, Kansas, September 27, 2019, at 1000, with the Rev. Aaron Williams officiating.

The family would like to thank: Dr. F. Ronald Seglie and staff, Pittsburg, Kansas; Via Christi Hospital Nursing and Rehab staff, Pittsburg, Kansas; John Mazurek, Esq. and staff, Pittsburg, Kansas; Dr. Scott Evans, Primary Care Physician/Roper Physician Partner; Lauren McNeill, DNP, Charleston Urology Associates; 7-Buxton staff, Roper Hospital; Roper Rehabilitation staff, Roper Hospital and Home Health; FOX Rehabilitation staff; and Lutheran Hospice, all of Charleston and Mt. Pleasant, SC, for their roles in making Gertrude's move from Kansas to South Carolina seamless and, above all, her transition from life to death meaningful and painless.

Sympathy cards/expressions may be mailed to:

Family of Gertrude Craddock

c/o Melissa McDonough

1378 West Point Drive

Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466

Arrangements in care of Charleston Cremation And Funeral Home.

# Comments

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Gertrude Craddock.



September 22, 2019 at 01:29 PM

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Gertrude Craddock.



**Adam Burch** - September 11, 2019 at 01:33 PM

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“ I'm so very sorry to hear of the loss of your mother. My thoughts and prayers for the family.

**Brenda Robinson Naylor** - September 10, 2019 at 05:17 AM



“ Thank you, Brenda.

**Melissa** - September 10, 2019 at 12:24 PM



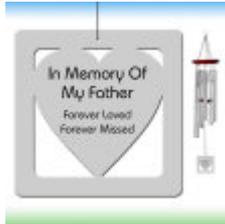
“ Your Mother was a very sweet lady! Soo sorry for your loss!

**Joan Sullivan** - September 10, 2019 at 02:31 PM

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“ Heart Wind Chime - Silver was purchased for the family of Gertrude Craddock.



September 10, 2019 at 01:10 AM

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“ God bless you, Mellisa and family, as you deal with your mothers passing. What a legacy she leaves behind to you!! Few have been able to meet and know such a brave woman, much less be availed of her wisdom, bravery and determination. May you all live, peacefully and proudly, with such blood in your veins. You have my deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences.

**Joy Sanders** - September 09, 2019 at 09:16 PM



“ Thank you, Joy. I know she touched many lives and her spirit lives on in us.

**Melissa** - September 10, 2019 at 12:23 PM



“ Wow your Mother lived an amazing life! Explains alot about your strenght of character Melissa. Our thoughts are with you and your family.

**Adam** - September 11, 2019 at 01:27 PM

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“ Mary I am so sorry to hear of your Mothers passing. May our Lord hold you all in the palm of His hand during this time. “Hugs”.

Sheina Huffman

**SHuffman** - September 09, 2019 at 06:49 PM



“ Thank you for your condolences, Sheina.

**Melissa** - September 10, 2019 at 12:28 PM

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“ Amazing Lady, always made you feel so welcome in her home. My condolences to the family. May she rest in peace.

**Diana Moore** - September 09, 2019 at 06:24 PM



“ Thank you, Diana.

**Melissa** - September 10, 2019 at 12:25 PM

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“ I am so very sorry for the passing of Gertrude. I did not know her very well but what I did know, was her sweet personality. Would visit with her briefly at the post office or grocery store and enjoyed talking with her. She was a great lady! Please except our heartfelt sympathy. Sincerely, Lana &Milt Alexander

**Lana** - September 09, 2019 at 06:21 PM



“ Thank you, Lana. She loved her visits with the people of Weir as she “made her rounds.” Everyone in that town was family to her, even if she didn’t know them well. I heard her speak of you before so you definitely made an impression.

**Melissa** - September 10, 2019 at 12:27 PM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gertrude Craddock.



September 09, 2019 at 06:17 PM