



Bonnie Brinegar

November 27, 1931 - February 9, 2011

Bonnie J. Brinegar, 79, of Bloomington, passed away on February 9, 2011, after a four-year struggle with Parkinson's disease. Bonnie was born near Smithville on November 27, 1931 to John and Golda ("Goldie") Axsom. Bonnie and her older (and equally impish) sister, June, were inseparable both as children and adults. The girls inherited their mother's legendary humor and kindness, bringing lightness and joy to the Axsom household during the hard years of the Depression. Bonnie loved animals and was never far from horses, dogs, cats, or Polly (her parrot) as a child. Bonnie's gentle nature was captured forever in a photograph showing her as a beautiful 10-year-old farm girl cradling her beloved blind pony, Flicka. Shortly after graduating from Smithville High School in 1950, Bonnie married Louis Brinegar, a handsome boy from Harrodsburg with a cocky smile and a shiny black '41 Chevy sedan. With the help of his brothers and father, Louis built a home on Country Club Drive in Bloomington in 1955 where the couple lived together for over 55 years. Bonnie's first job was waitressing at the Geranium Tea Room which was operated out of the neighboring McDowell house on S. Rogers Street and run by Katherine McDowell who became Bonnie's surrogate mother after Goldie's passing in 1954. Bonnie worked for several years as a popular cook at Broadview Elementary where she sprinkled her own special brand of fairy dust onto children in the lunch line. From there she worked as a nurse's aide at the former Hospitality House and Fountainbleu nursing homes where she excelled at making patients feel comfortable and loved. Bonnie's final

employer was Dan Pugh, owner of Indiana Prescription Laboratories, whose oddball sense of humor and mastery of the practical joke made it her favorite job ever. From the time Bonnie was a little girl she dreamed of having three sons. Her wishes came true with the births of sons Greg (1951), Chris (1954) and Matt (1965). Quick to forgive the noise, mess and minor trouble-making of three energetic boys, she provided a loving and supportive home environment, instilling her values into her sons by example, never by harsh discipline. And, oh, how that woman could cook! Her weekly pie would disappear within minutes, and her annual doughnut parties went on for hours, stopping only when son Matt beat his doughnut-eating record of the previous year. No Thanksgiving dinner could commence unless her homemade dinner rolls were served, earning her the nickname "Buns" Brinegar. Bonnie had some odd, but endearing, habits that set her apart from other women in the neighborhood. She loved the wind and would go outside just before a thunderstorm, hair flying wildly as she leaned into the impending storm pretending to be Charlton Heston (a.k.a. Moses) as he parted the Red Sea. No one was safe from Bonnie if any kind of whipped food was within her reach. One of her favorite targets, nephew David Blackwell, can testify to how cunning and silent she could be as she stalked him with a handful of mashed potatoes or whipped cream. Bonnie lived for the warmth of Spring and Summer, fighting the onset of Winter with every ounce of her being. She was caught on more than one occasion trying to tape the fallen autumn leaves back onto their naked branches. Bonnie will be sorely missed by family and friends. May Heaven be filled with ponies, parrots, wind, warmth and leafy trees . . . and if mashed potatoes are served in Heaven, the angels better watch their backs. Bonnie was predeceased by her parents and two brothers, James and Wesley Axsom. She is survived by her husband of over 60 years, Louis, and three sons, Greg of Solsberry, Matt of Bloomington and Chris of New Portland, Maine; sister June Baugh of Greenwood; daughter-in-laws Jennifer Brinegar of Bloomington and Bonnie Brinegar of New Portland, Maine; grandchildren Rachael, Sarah and Sam Brinegar of Bloomington, Zach

Brinegar of Atlanta, Georgia, Rueben Bolton of San Jose, California and Eric Brinegar of Anchorage, Alaska. Bonnie had three great-grandchildren, Brad, Lindsey and Kai Brinegar. Funeral services will be held 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, February 16, 2011 at Allen Funeral Home with Brother Michael Nowlin officiating. Entombment will follow at Valhalla Memory Gardens. Family will receive friends from 4-9 pm on Tuesday at the funeral home.