



## Ernestine Rocheleau

November 21, 1918 - July 20, 2013

Ernestine "Erna" Elizabeth (McKenna) Rocheleau, 94, most recently a resident of Hyland Nursing Home, passed away on July 20, 2013, at the nursing home.

She was born on Nov. 21, 1918, in Camden, N.J. where her parents ran a boarding house. Erna was orphaned at four years of age and moved to Iron Mountain to live with relatives when she was eight. She graduated from Iron Mountain High School as valedictorian in 1937. She was also the first female Student Council president of Iron Mountain High School.

Erna married Romeo Rocheleau, a widower who had four children, Edward, Mary, Lorraine and Marge. She also gave birth to three children of her own, Evelyn (Cookie), Tom and William (Bill).

Together Erna and Romeo were owners of the Home Bakery, famous for its pasties sold all over the U.P. at ski tournaments, fairs and sporting events. Romeo had purchased the pasty recipe from a Cornish woman back in the 1940's.

The history of the pasty is told by wives of the Cornish miners, who made them for their husbands and wrapped them in newspaper. The miners carried pasties inside their shirts to keep them warm, and at lunchtime heated them

up on shovels over the candles from their helmets.

The Rocheleau's had turned selling pasties into a thriving business, one that still survives today through the many pasty businesses throughout the Upper Peninsula and elsewhere. In addition to pasties, the bakery also offered delicious breads, pies, cakes, Danish pastry and other items. They also catered lunchtime meals to the Perfex Corporation located at the former Kingsford Ford Plant.

In 1964, when the bakery closed, Erna moved to Philadelphia. Romeo followed shortly afterward and they remained there for the next 25 years. She managed a chain store for Hanscom's, a bakery and confectionary, while Romeo worked at his nephew's bakery. They both returned to Iron Mountain in 1988.

Erna was a long-time member of Immaculate Conception Church along with the Daughters of Isabella and the church Guild. She also volunteered to be a greeter at Mass and a counter for the offerings each week. She was very active in the Lady Elks, planning and serving at the Elks Christmas Party for underprivileged children for many years. She also worked with the local Girl Scout organization. She was requested on many occasions to present a "mime skit," accompanied by "The Laughing Song" at various service organizations and hospitals over the years. While still proprietors of the Home Bakery, Erna would provide days-end baked goods to the Carmelite Monastery for the enjoyment of the Sisters.

Before moving to Hyland Nursing Home in 2009, Erna was a resident at Victoria Pines.

She is survived by her children, Evelyn "Cookie" (William) Lachance of Haymarket, Va., Thomas (Nancy) Rocheleau of Hollywood, Md., William

(Sharon) Rocheleau of Iron Mountain, and step-daughter, Marguerite "Marge" (Wally) Terry of Racine, Wis.; along with ten grandchildren, Dana, Kathi, Stephanie, Billy, Jennifer, Kevin, Sean, Greg, Nicole and Jessica; numerous step-grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and one sister, Florence Sember of Los Angeles.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Romuald "Romeo" Rocheleau in 1993; sisters, Evelyn Ginieczki of Philadelphia and Gertrude O'Toole of Rogers City, Mich.; and her brother, Edward McKenna of Chicago.

Friends may call from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2013, at the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday at 10 a.m. at Immaculate Conception Church. Msgr. James Kaczmarek will offer the Mass of Christian Burial.

In lieu of flowers, the family would ask that any donations be made to: Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament, 29575 Middlebelt Rd, Farmington Hills, MI 48334, in memory of Ernestine Rocheleau and Sister Mary of the Angels.

Condolences to the family of Ernestine "Erna" Rocheleau may be expressed online at [ernashfuneralhomes.com](http://ernashfuneralhomes.com).

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon and Nash Funeral Home of Iron Mountain with the funeral arrangements.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 7. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Erickson-Rochon and Nash Funeral Home  
901 Carpenter Ave.  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

## Mass of Christian Burial

AUG 8. 10:00 AM (CT)

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
500 Blaine St.  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

# Tribute Wall



“ Erickson-Rochon-Nash Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Ernestine Rocheleau



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**Erickson-Rochon-Nash Funeral Home** - July 20, 2013 at 12:00 AM

LF

“ My condolences to your family on the loss of one of the most beloved. We reunited at church. I have known Erna for many years. Her welcoming smile was always a pleasure to receive. As a youngster, I would run to the bakery to get the pasties that all other pasties are compared 'til this day...known then as Rochleau's pasties. Our family loved the fresh Persian, Bismarks, and Long Johns. Potato rolls were always served at Thanksgiving dinner. The memories of the smell of fresh bread and rolls baking and the beautiful woven basket cake filled with colorful flowers that sat on the top of the pastry case always fascinated. Memories are so wonderful! Your mother will be remembered by many and spoken kindly of for many years to come.

+ May the Lord bless you with the greatest memories of the good time you had with your beloved mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, and great grandmother.

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**Lana Smith - Iron Mountain, MI - Immaculate Conception family** - August 07, 2013 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ My sympathy to the family at this time of loss. Erna was a fine woman and fun to be around in years past.  
My wife Jeanne and I met as employees of her bakery. We married soon after and our marriage lasted 65 years. Jeanne is now deceased. We so often spoke of our singing while we cleaned the angel food cake pans, the laughter and fun we had at the bakery. Interesting enough, we bought the once bakery property and we built a car wash that stands there today. Good memories of better times.  
+ May God bless your family with peace.

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**Al Antonini - Mesa, AZ - Employee at the Home Bakery** - August 07, 2013 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ Bill, My condolences on the loss of your mother. I can close my eyes and remember her at the bakery on Carpenter in the early 60s  
Jason Julian

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**Jason Julian - Dewitt, MI** - August 06, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ Bill and Sharon,  
Just wanted to pass on our condolences on the passing of your mother. Our thoughts and prayers are with you both.

Steve and Karen

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**Steve and Karen Merhalski - Bedford, NH - Friend** - August 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM

BJ

“ *To the Family:*

*In the loss of your loved one these words of sympathy are sent with the hope that as time goes by, cherished memories can help to bring You inner peace.*

*With depest sympayhy and love  
Bob and Hazel Rose*

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**Bob & Hazel Rose - Jerseyville IL. 62052 (SUMMER} ARCADIA FL. ( WINTER),  
IL - Friends From Jerse - August 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM**