



## Madelyn R. Merwin

July 29, 1924 - September 26, 2011

Madelyn R. Merwin, 87, of Manteno, died Monday (Sept. 26, 2011) at her home.

She was born July 29, 1924, in Kankakee, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar "Buzz" and Viola Bourell. The family moved to Waukegan in 1927 where she attended local schools. In 1934, Mr. Bourell was transferred to Evanston where Madelyn graduated from Evanston Township High School and attended Northwestern University's Chicago campus for a short time. In June of 1951 she married Donald P. Merwin in Kankakee.

Mrs. Merwin's journalistic career began in 1949 when she joined the staff of The Daily Journal as a society reporter and columnist. When she and her family moved to Joliet, she was employed as managing editor of Illinois' then-largest weekly newspaper, The Spectator, followed by several years in radio at WJOL, Joliet, as early morning news editor and on-the-air personality. It was during her stint at WJOL Mrs. Merwin was elected a director on the board of the Illinois News Broadcasters Association, the first woman to hold office in the INBA's predominately male membership.

Moving to Louisville, Ky., Mrs. Merwin joined the staff of The National Horseman, a monthly magazine for show horse owners, as senior editor. She later moved to WHAS' radio division, and then to WHAS television, where she

was editor and producer of an hourlong news program, again the first woman in the newsroom. Also while in Louisville, she recorded Talking Books for the blind under the auspices of the Library of Congress.

The Merwin family returned to Illinois in 1968 and Mrs. Merwin joined the staff of Star Newspapers in Chicago Heights. She ultimately became the first woman at The Star to be named an associate editor on the news side.

Her last full-time job for Star Newspapers was senior editor of the arts and entertainment weekly magazine. Merwin retired in January of 1990 but continued to write a weekly question and answer travel column for The Star as well as The Daily Herald newspapers in Arlington Heights and The Daily Journal in Kankakee. She also wrote travel features for Elite Magazine and The Daily Southtown. Merwin was a member of the Society of American Travel Writers, the Midwest Travel Writers Association, Manteno United Methodist Church and co-founder and past president of the Manteno Historical Society. She was a former member of the Manteno Board of Zoning Appeals, the Manteno Police Pension Board and the Manteno Library Board and editor of Manteno Memo, a village newsletter. She was a former volunteer at the Illinois Veterans Home at Manteno and the Meals on Wheels program.

In 1994 she was named Manteno Citizen of the Year and Kankakee County Citizen of the Year in the civic category. In 1995 she was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel by the governor of Kentucky for her contribution to the tourism industry of that state.

She is survived by her husband, Don; two daughters, Donna Ann and Patrick Hayes, of Virginia Beach, Va., and Paula Jett, of Manteno; 11 grandchildren who called her Bonka, Carolyn and Kevin Mohr, of Midlothian, Va., Patrick and Chrissi Hayes, of Virginia Beach, Greg and Pam Hayes, of Fayetteville, N.C., Cheryl Lynn and Shawn Mohr, Jason and Adrian Hayes, and Nicholas Clark,

all of Virginia Beach, Shane Clark (Amanda Rae) of Rochester, N.Y., Heather DeBouck and Melanie DeBouck, of Orange County, Calif., Jennifer and Todd Yarno, of Manteno, and Melissa Jett, of Manteno; and 20 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by one sister and brother in law, Patricia and Norman "Bud" Hartman of Manteno, and two nieces.

She was preceded in death by her parents; one son, William DeBouck; and one son-in-law, Donald Jett.

Visitation will be from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday, and from 10 a.m. Thursday until the 11 a.m. funeral services at the Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Manteno.

Burial will be in Elmwood Cemetery, Manteno. Memorials may be made to the American Diabetes Association in memory of her son, William DeBouck, who preceded her in death in 1999, or to Hospice of Kankakee Valley.  
Memorials - American Diabetes Association - [www.diabetes.org/](http://www.diabetes.org/)

# Cemetery Details

## Elmwood Cemetery

9000 E. Road  
Manteno, IL 60950  
(815) 468-7891

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **28**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Manteno - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.  
291 N. Main St.  
Manteno, IL 60950  
(815) 932-1214  
cgfuneral@gmail.com

## Funeral Service

SEP **29**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Manteno - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.  
291 N. Main St.  
Manteno, IL 60950  
(815) 932-1214  
cgfuneral@gmail.com

# Tribute Wall

SH

“*Madelyn and I shared and enjoyed numerous happy and fun times throughtout our friendship. It would take a book to list them all. When our lives went in different directions we lost contact for a few years; jobs,families and activities predominated and became the norm and routine. Fond memories encouraged me to make a phone call and set up a date for lunch and girl talk. That we did and our first lunch started off with tears of joy for both of us. We talked and laughed, talked and laughed, talked and laughed trying to fill in for lost time reviewing past activities and catching up on children and grandchildren. It became an annual celebration at the same restaurant for several years. It required no long planning. A quick and simple date and time on an e-mail message. The remaining conversation we saved for over lunch. I know we both looked forward to those rare visits. I am so happy I had the opportunity to visit her even though she may not have recognized me. I miss my friend! I'm happy I saw the two daughters I knew in my past had not seen for such a long time; I was proud to meet some granchildren who treated me so very lovingly. God bless all of you!*”

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**Shirley H. Hill** - September 29, 2011 at 08:52 AM

SM

“*To the one and only Bonka...Rest in Peace.*”

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**Shawn Mohr** - September 28, 2011 at 04:24 PM

MH

“*Condolences to your family. Merritt Hansen*”

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**Merritt Hansen** - September 28, 2011 at 08:09 AM

KR

“*Madelyn was a trendsetter for women in journalism with several "firsts" to her name. As her editor for more than 12 years at the Daily Herald, I found her to be a dependable columnist who always met her deadlines and answered questions promptly. As her friend, I treasured her company. Traveling with Madelyn always made the trip more pleasurable. She will be missed.*

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**Kathy Rodeghier** - September 27, 2011 at 08:04 PM

JL

“*Madelyn was a true journalist who knew how to stop being a fly on the wall when the time was right. She was an original, inspirational and a wonder person to whom I referred to as my dear colleague and, ultimately, my friend. Madelyn will be missed.*

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**jane lasky** - September 27, 2011 at 07:40 PM

GH

“*Madelyn was always such a nice lady. Smart and an asset to the community of Manteno. Always enjoyed seeing and visiting with her - she will be missed by many. Our condolences, Gary & Sue Hoskins, Gilbertsville, KY*

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**Gary & Sue Hoskins** - September 27, 2011 at 01:24 PM

MS

“ Farewell, my Snoop Sister. I am so sorry to hear of Madelyn's passing. She was my editor and a mentor when I joined the staff of Star Newspapers in Chicago Heights in 1976. She and another editor, Carol Roberts, influenced me a great deal and the three of us eventually were dubbed "The Snoop Sisters" by our editor -- both for our journalistic activity and for our legendary interoffice sleuthing! It was Madelyn who taught me to check the office copy machine several times a day for originals left on the glass, documents that often were very revealing. But the best thing I learned from Madelyn was how to enjoy your grandchildren. Bonka always had kids visiting, or was visiting them. The first Saturday shift I worked with Madelyn at The Star we walked across the street to a bakery to pick up a birthday cake for Jenny Jett's party that evening. It is because I am out of town visiting my own grandchildren this week that I will miss Madelyn's funeral, but I think she would be OK with that.  
Marge Seltzner

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**Marge Seltzner** - September 27, 2011 at 01:12 PM

JC

*Want a wonderful women & life she lived!*

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**Jami Crithfield** - September 27, 2011 at 03:11 PM