

Mabel R. Ross, 93, of Batavia went to be with her Savior on Saturday, January 10, 2009, at Provena Mercy Medical Center, Aurora. She was born July 26, 1915, in Falun, Wis., to Oscar and Ellen (Anderson) Malmquist.

Mabel was raised in northwest Wisconsin and was valedictorian of her 8th grade class. She was one of the first to taste test General Mills Cheerios. She also worked as a nanny, maid, and cook in the Minneapolis area and later in Evanston and Geneva, Ill.

She was united in marriage to Paul A. Ross of Wasco, Ill., on December 18, 1948, in St. Croix Falls, Wis.

After living on a farm for several years in the Wasco/St. Charles area, she and her husband and family moved to Batavia in the fall of 1953. In 1959, the family moved to a new Batavia home. For several years she was employed by Lauzen Accounting and by Goodwill Industries – Chicago as a phone solicitor.

Dedicated to her Lord and her community, she was involved with the Aurora chapter of Bread for the World and also fought to have the government provide dried milk to the Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry. She worked to improve her home city, Batavia, by fighting for a PACE bus route to Batavia's east side, for a downtown cab service, and for Sunday blue-box postal pickup. She also worked with the mayor to obtain a new grocery store for Batavia's east side after the closing of Walt's Supermarket.

In the late '70s, she crusaded with current Batavia mayor Jeff Schielke and Fire Chief Robert Hodge to have the Wilson St. and Prairie St. propane distribution site moved out of Batavia. Once called "chicken little" by a local newspaper because of her warnings of danger to the residential community, her view prevailed with the state fire marshal after an unsupervised fire at the site.

Because of her love for her Savior and children, Mabel provided the spark needed to renew Children's Day in America. She reminded her son, John, that Children's Day was observed in her church when she was young. So with this spark from Mabel in 2005, a renewal movement began. In 2007 and 2008, the Illinois governor, as well as the mayors of Aurora and Batavia, proclaimed the second Sunday in June to be Children's Day. Once again the day is celebrated by numerous individuals and churches. The ongoing effort is supported by the website www.nationalchildrensday.us, by individuals, and by church and civic leaders.

In her early twenties, Mabel was one of the first in the nation to have experimental surgery at the University of Minnesota for a detached retina. In later years, legally blind and having a hard time leaving the home, she loved to talk on the telephone and encourage friends. Over the last eight years, she fought off numerous infections with faith and determination.

Mabel was a member of the West Chicago Bible Church (now Water's Edge Bible Church) and had numerous friends at First Presbyterian Church – Aurora .

She is survived by her son, John P. Ross of Batavia; her daughter, Betsy E. (Alan) Phillips of Batavia; and her grandchildren, David Phillips and Matthew Phillips of Batavia; nieces Becky Schmidt of Memphis, Tenn., and Susan (Victor) Cavender of Odessa, Mo.; Minnesota cousins Carl (Phyllis) Anderson of Princeton; David (Joyce) Anderson of Richfield; Ellen Niznik of Minneapolis; Myrtle (Neil) Danielson of Cambridge; Ruth (Henry) Michael of Circle Pines; Wisconsin cousin Linnea Brask of Frederic; and her husband's niece Betty (David) Swanberg of Santa Ana, Calif.

She was preceded in death by her husband; her parents; brothers Winston (Alice) Malmquist and Paul Malmquist, infant; and cousin Lilly (Alton) Dahl.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 15, 2009, at Moss Family Funeral Home, 209 S. Batavia Ave., Batavia, Ill., with the Rev. Jeffrey B. Moore of First Presbyterian Church – Aurora officiating. Visitation will be from 10:00 a.m. to the beginning of the funeral service. Interment will be in Batavia West Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to World Vision, P.O. Box 9716 Federal Way, WA 98063-9716 (www.worldvision.org).

For further information, call Moss Family Funeral Home at (630) 879-7900 or visit www.mossfuneral.com.

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