



# Olson, Bonnie Rose

JAN 8, 1941 - FEB 22, 2026



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MAUI MEMORIAL PARK  
NAKAMURA MORTUARY  
CEMETERY, CREMATION & FUNERAL

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## **Olson, Bonnie Rose**

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**I**t is with heavy hearts that we announce the unexpected passing of Bonnie Rose (Willett) Olson, 85, “The Hat Lady” on February 22, 2026, in Maui, Hawaii. Bonnie was the matriarch of the family; she built a village with a strong foundation. Bonnie was born in Eau Claire on January 8, 1941, to Robert and Geraldine Willett. Two years later her brother Charles was born. As a family they traveled throughout the United States. Bonnie loved to roller and ice skate. She was a car hop at the root beer stand on Madison Street. After her shift she’d walk home and yes, it was uphill. She graduated from Regis High School in 1958. She met her husband Jerry on a blind date; they went to the fair. Soon after he offered to teach her how to drive. Jerry was drafted into the Army and when he came home at Christmas he proposed. In August 1960 she married her one true love, Jerry (Gerald) and that love lasted for the next 65+ years. Jerry would tell you that the secret to their marriage was, “Yes, Dear!” To this union they had three children, Scott, Renee, and Lisa. She gave her children many opportunities to get involved and try new things, as she wanted to keep them out of trouble. They went to guitar lessons, art class, baton, gymnastics, sewing, and swimming lessons. They developed a strong work ethic at an early age as she didn’t believe in child labor laws. They have many treasured memories at the cottage on Big Chetac Lake in Birchwood, snowmobiling, and camping in their StarCraft camper while vacationing throughout the United States. Later in life Bonnie and Jerry bought timeshares and shared those with many friends and family. Bonnie loved to entertain. Her table was always set for every occasion, and she often welcomed guests to join them. They hosted family gatherings, Knights of Columbus Tom & Jerry parties, neighborhood get togethers, and many other celebrations. Bonnie loved to decorate for seasons, holidays, and many themes such as Valentines, St. Patrick’s, Easter, Lemons, Americana, Watermelon, Sunflowers, Fall/Apples, Halloween/Pumpkins, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Snowman. Her table was always



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set, and she had a flair for dishes, napkins, centerpieces, and tablecloths that made even everyday meals special. She'd be the first to volunteer if it involved decorating and her decorating was second to none. At Christmas her house was decorated like a Hallmark movie. She had at least seven trees decorated every year with various themes. Christmas Eve was the one day of the year that she wanted her entire village to be together.

Bonnie worked at Sacred Heart Hospital as a Surgical Technician for over 45 years. She always wore 'scrub dresses' instead of the typical pants' attire. Bonnie and Jerry owned the Finishing Touch for 17 years, a custom framing and needlework store. Bonnie was involved in the community, and she held many leadership positions. She was President of Catholic Women's Club, Queen Bee of Red Hats, President of Wisconsin Hospital Association, President of Volunteer Partners of Sacred Heart Hospital, and served on many boards and was involved in many more organizations. She was known for her calligraphy and was asked to address envelopes for weddings, baptismal certificates, and Knights of Columbus certificates.

Bonnie was a fashionista, always dressed to the nines. She was known for her style, her full head of hair, colorful outfits, polished nails, assorted jewelry, and high heels. The "hat lady" also had an extensive collection of unique hats.

Bonnie loved to SHOP, travel, decorate, entertain, and play bridge. She loved Elvis, ribs, dark chocolate, butter and tea. She was a collector of many things. She loved the finer things in life and shared whatever she had with others. She made homemade cards and sent them to friends if they were sick, lonely or just to say hi. She was a selfless woman, always doing things for others. She added flair and an extra touch to anything she did. Her work ethic is something to be emulated. Her hands were never idle, whether she was crocheting dishcloths or making bows. She loved to bake and cook and shared her made from scratch meals with friends and family.

Bonnie is survived by her always and forever, Jerry, her brother Charles (Kathryn) Willett, her brother-in-law Don Walker, sister-in-law Edythe Olson, and sister-in-law and brother-in-law Maryann and Roger Biesterveld. Also, her three children, Scott (Brenda) Olson, Renee (Darell) Liming, and Lisa (John) Ausman.

Bonnie adored her nine grandchildren who called her Nana - Joshua (Erin) Ausman,



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Jacob (Kim) Ausman, Rebecca (Nicholas) Sanderfoot, Isaac (Sonya) Olson, Rachel (Shawn) Wong, Jesse (Emi) Olson, Solomon Olson, Sarah (Andrew) Haselwander, and Elijah Olson. Nana & Papa supported them in all their endeavors as they attended art shows, plays, dance recitals, cross-country ski meets and ball games. Often traveling out of town, they could be found sitting in the bleachers or lawn chairs, in the rain, cold or dark, to cheer them on.

Nana also loved her twelve great-grandchildren and made each of them feel very special by spoiling them with their favorite treats - Luke Ausman, Abram Ausman, Otto Olson, Duncan Ausman, Naomi Sanderfoot, Mildred Olson, Norbert Sanderfoot, Jeremy Haselwander, Emily Wong, Nowell Sanderfoot, Adalyn Haselwander and Sophie Wong.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at noon on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at St. James the Greater, 2502 11th Street in Eau Claire, where she was a faithful lifetime member. Visitation will be from 10:00-12:00 before the service at the church.

Luncheon will follow.

To celebrate the life of Bonnie, join us in wearing bright colors and ladies consider wearing a hat. Interment will be at Calvary Mausoleum in Eau Claire.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to Eau Claire Community Foundation – Women’s Giving Circle, 7 S Dewey, Eau Claire, WI 54703, St James the Greater Endowment Fund - 2502 11th Street, Eau Claire, WI 54703, or Regis Catholic Schools Foundation – 2728 Mall Drive, Ste 200, Eau Claire, WI 54701.

Bonnie leaves a legacy of faith, family, and service. Her generous spirit will be treasured for generations to come. She had a remarkable sense of style and a natural eye for beauty. Bonnie loved God, family, fashion, decorating, and entertaining.

Nakamura Mortuary in Maui served the family. Online memories and condolences can be shared at <https://www.nakamuramortuary.com>.



## Tribute Wall

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A

**Aaron Willett** posted:

Aunt Bonnie was a very kind, generous, and caring person who enjoyed shopping and wearing fancy hats. I'll always remember the times where she opened up her house to me and my family while we visited her in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I'll remember the great dinners and barbecues we had together in her backyard while we talked about the Green Bay Packers. She will be missed. Love, Aaron

March 11 at 9:28 AM

K

**K Lem** posted:

I will always remember my Aunt Bonnie for her large family gatherings at her festive decorated house when we would come annually/semi-annually to visit. I've always admired her faith and the importance of family I seen growing up, that I also hope to replicate with my own family. I also loved to spend time at their store, Finishing Touch as a kid, where I remember Aunt Bonnie gave me my first opportunity to make some extra money as being an "employee" and made me feel special and older. There are many memories that I will always cherish and remember about Aunt Bonnie, and I feel that I share some of the same qualities she carried, as I'm always in search of a "great deal" shopping. And when my husband asks how much I spent...I tell him, "it's not how much I spent, it's how much I saved!" Lol! I think I got that one from my Aunt Bonnie;) May she rest in peace and have the endless shopping and deals in heaven. -Kristen Lem (Willett)

March 11 at 6:20 AM



**Nancy Hietpas** posted:

My prayers and sympathy to Bonnie's family. I was a classmate of Bonnie's at St. James and Regis... Visited with her many times at her frame shop, when I would come to Eau Claire. Always an interesting and stylist lady. Many memories remain with me to this day. God's peace be with all of you at this sad time...

March 6 at 7:38 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Bonnie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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