

IRENE T. (ZOLNIERZAK) BIELEC



Formerly of Braddock, a resident of Allegheny Place in Penn Hills, age 103, died peacefully on Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Irene was the beloved wife of Edward J. Bielec, Sr. for 25 years.

She was the loving mother of Edward J. (Cynthia) Bielec of FL, Dr. Cynthia (Claude) McDonald of CA, and the late Theodore Bielec.

Irene was also the dear grandmother of Jeffrey (Jennifer) Bielec, Gregory (Melissa) Bielec, Kimberly Perez, Chad Bielec, Carly Bielec and Carrie Bielec.

She is also survived by 12 great-grandchildren.

Irene was preceded in death by her parents, Frank and Stella (Lelinski) Zolnierzak; and her siblings, Chester Zolnierzak, Rev. Fr. Stanley Zolnierzak, Henry Zolnierzak, Cecelia Owen, Mary Blasik and Edward Zolnierzak.

Irene was a 1940 graduate of Braddock High School, and shortly thereafter, she embodied the spirit of "Rosie the Riveter" for Mine Safety Appliances. At Mine Safety, Irene's job included testing valves for oxygen systems and soldering carbon monoxide alarms for the military. In 1947, she married Ed and started her family. After Ed's death in 1972, and needing to go to work, Irene found employment at Braddock General Hospital as an aide in the Dietary Department, and worked for the hospital until her retirement. Her favorite pastimes were passionately rooting for the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pittsburgh Pirates and telling stories about "the old days." Irene was known for her pleasant personality and brought joy to those she encountered. In questioning her role in life at her advanced age, she was told that she spread happiness, and that was her role. Even her hospice nurses over the past two weeks looked forward to visiting with Irene for the delight that she brought to all.

Her spirit was a blend of resilience and gentleness, and she set an example of how to live a life full of purpose, acceptance and joy.

All are welcome on Sunday, from 2-6 p.m., at **PATRICK T. LANIGAN FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY, INC.**, 700 Linden Ave. at Cable, East Pittsburgh, PA 15112, 412-824-8800.

Mass of Christian Burial will be in Sacred Heart Church, Braddock Hills (St. Joseph the Worker Parish) on Monday, at 10 a.m.

Irene will be laid to rest in Braddock Catholic Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to: www.freestore15104.org, or Free Store, 420 Braddock Ave., Braddock, PA 15104.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb