



Ellen May Bender

September 4, 1939 - April 30, 2026

Ellen May Bender, age 86, passed away on Thursday, April 30th, 2026 at her home of 54 years in Henrietta Township, Richland County.

Ellen was born on September 4th, 1939, in rural Richland County to August and Bessie (Kaderavek) Dvorak. She graduated from Richland Center High School in 1957 and attended Teacher's College to fulfill her dream of becoming an educator. Ellen taught in numerous "one-room" schools before going back to UW-Platteville to complete her Bachelor of Science degree in Education. Ellen spent many years teaching for the Kickapoo School District at both West Lima and Viola. She touched so many lives through her years of teaching and rarely forgot her students' names, even years later, when she would see them out and about.

Early in her teaching career, Ellen met the love of her life, Robert Bender. They were married on August 7, 1960, at St. John's Lutheran Church and spent 65 years building a wonderful life together.

Ellen was an avid gardener for many years, providing both fresh and canned vegetables to family and friends. Many weekends were spent cooking delicious meals and spending time with friends. Her love of all things chickens and wild birds, especially hummingbirds, was evident throughout their house and yard. In retirement, Ellen enjoyed many crafts, especially quilting, along with keeping a daily journal. She loved the holidays and spent a great deal of time decorating the house to match the holiday.

Ellen is survived by: her husband, Robert Bender; son, Robert Jr. (Tammy) Bender of rural Richland Center; daughter, Anne (Don) Wallace of rural Coon Valley; sister, Helen (Marvin) Anderson of West Lima; sisters-in-law Barb Dvorak of Bristol, Gloria Dvorak of rural Cazenovia, Sal Borton of Georgia, and Valerie Laine of Arizona; many wonderful nieces and nephews and their families; special longtime friends Lucy, Carolyn, and Edna.

Ellen was preceded in death by her infant daughter, Rebecca; brothers, Kenny Dvorak and Bobbie Dvorak; brothers-in-law, Ron Bender and Bill Borton.

Ellen's greatest love was her family, who will miss her dearly. Her greatest gift was nurturing and caring for those around her.

Upon Ellen's wishes, no formal funeral service will be held. The Clary Memorial Funeral Home assisted the family with arrangements.

Tribute Wall

DE

“ Sorry for your loss

Deb - May 06 at 09:52 AM

KG

“ Mrs. Bender taught me at Kickapoo Elementary, 3rd Grade! She was my favorite! Looking back, she held each of her students dear to her heart and always had more than enough love for them all! I will always remember, as her smile didn't fade. What a wonderful Teacher!!



Kristi Gillingam - May 04 at 02:38 PM

WM

“ Our sympathy in the loss of Ellen May. She was a dear friend. We will miss her smile and good visits. Walt & Loretta McCarthy

Walter McCarthy - May 04 at 08:03 AM

VW

“ My sympathy to the Bender family i remember Ellen and her sister Helen from school got to know Tammy thru my work on county board played cards years later with Kenny Ellen will be missed by all that knew her



Virginia Wiedenfeld - May 03 at 12:27 AM

GP

“ Extending sympathy--always had a kind smile to share...👉

ginger parkhurst - May 02 at 01:30 PM

MB

My sympathy to the family for their loss.

Marvin Bell - May 02 at 01:38 PM

BK

Sending my extended sympathy to the entire family . Ellen was my Mothers maid of honor in in mother and dad's Wedding RIP ELLEN

Bill Kloehn - May 02 at 04:41 PM

MA

My sympathy to the Bender family. Mrs Bender was the third grade teacher at Viola Elementary when I attended there. She was so caring for all the students. My thoughts and prayers to all.

Maria(Larson)Campbell - May 02 at 07:41 PM

DH

Being our nearby neighbor, we knew her so well. She was always a good person. My Mom and her had many conversations. When I drove by her house I would always look to see if she was out and think of her. It's like the history of our lives are slowly fading into the past and Ellen is now one of them but, not forgotten. God bless her and thank you for being a good neighbor.

Dan Hanzel - May 02 at 08:16 PM