Jewel Cathrine Harberding
(September 18, 1921 - April 29, 2017)

Jewel Cathrine Harberding, age 95, born to James & Eunice Upchurch (nee Lane) on September 18, 1921, passed away Saturday, April 29th, 2017 at Garden Place in Waterloo, Illinois.

Cathy was the eldest of the six Upchurch children and her family was originally from Cahokia, Illinois. She spent many years living in St. Louis prior to moving to Garden Place five years ago.

Cathy was a very talented and dedicated professional. Her first job was with Union Electric (now Ameren) for a period of 14 years. She also served a second term with U.E. spanning 17 years and her final role was Executive Secretary to the Vice President of Legal Council. Between her two terms at U.E., Cathy worked 16 years as Associate Director for the highly successful and popular Charlotte Peters Show which aired on KSD-TV and later on KTVI. Later in life (post-retirement), she worked as a legal secretary for various law firms in the Saint Louis area.

A woman of strong moral character, Cathy was the epitome of kindness and devotion. She was also witty, funny, and she loved life. She always took pride in her classy appearance, was always smartly attired, as there were never any casual Fridays for this fine lady.

Of the things that mattered most to Aunt Cathy was her family. Whether it was because of birth order, or the era in which she lived, from the very beginning she was the family matriarch. Sometimes acting as mentor, or mediator, she always enjoyed the final word. There was no negotiation to overcome her bountiful gracious tolerance.

Through the years Aunt Cathy’s role was enjoyed by numerous generations within her ever-extending family during her long life. Never stern nor cross, or ever too busy, if you were fortunate enough to be related to her, you would always and forever know you were loved.

Losing her husband early in life and having no children in a time and town replete with kids, didn’t stop her from spreading her affections and joy to anyone fortunate enough to enjoy her company. For Two decades, her home was the center of considerable activity. Family and friends spent wonderful times together enjoying her swimming pool, sharing laughs, and warm
kinship. She loved and treasured this era of her life.

At age 90 and still mastering the computer, Cathy began a memoir of her family history and events from her early life in the 1920’s and throughout the Great Depression. This initially took the form of group family emails that left everyone wanting more. “Cathy’s Chronicles” will forever be cherished by her family.

Displaying an almost eidetic memory, she recounted specific events including names and dates with an ordered chronology. Her telling of the stories conveyed an unvarnished honesty about a place and time of struggle and hardship but also a purposeful community, leaving the reader nostalgically envious of a time now gone, but thanks to her, not forgotten.

If Cathy were here to speak to us, she would remind each of us to be patient with one another, laugh, say something kind to each other every day, button up your coat and put on a hat. Her email signoff was often “Toodle Loo from Waterlooo, from your aunt who loves you” which aptly sums her up.

In addition to her parents, Cathy was preceded in death by her husband, Robert Harberding, two brothers, Carl Upchurch (Jean) and Robert Upchurch (Earline) both of Columbia, Illinois, her loving sister Jeanette Gericke (Delwin), and her beloved niece Julie Marie Gummersheimer (nee Upchurch).

Cathy is survived by her brother James Upchurch (Doris) of Dupo, Illinois, sister Johann Reynolds (William) of Columbia Illinois, and sister in law Earline Upchurch of Columbia, Illinois. She is survived by several generations of beloved nieces and nephews, in-laws, and numerous wonderful friends.

Memorials may be made to Garden Place in Waterloo, Illinois.

Visitation will be held Friday, May 5th, 2017 from 10:00am – 12:00pm at the Braun Family Funeral Home, Columbia, Illinois. Funeral services will follow at the funeral home with Reverend William Groennert officiating. Burial will be at Valhalla Cemetery in Belleville, Illinois.