



M. Edith Townsend

July 5, 1929 - August 25, 2025

Marie Edith Townsend (nee Kenney), 96 years, passed gently from this life on Monday, August 25, 2025.

She was born on July 5, 1929, the only child of Daniel and Edith Kesler Kenney, in Springfield, Pennsylvania. Her father called her 'Kid Biz,' a busy, active child, engaged in all social activities. She attended pre-school where her mother was a school nurse. In high school Edith played field hockey, basketball, and softball, graduating from Springfield High School in May 1947. She attended summer camps and became a counselor and lifeguard. She graduated from Bowling Green University in May 1951, where she excelled in synchronized swimming, as she pursued a teaching degree in physical education and human health. She was active in her sorority and still had time to meet her future husband.

Edith married Wallace Eugene Townsend on June 16, 1951, and taught school until his graduation from veterinary college in May 1956. Immediately, they loaded their possessions and two small daughters into their car and headed north to Gillett, Wisconsin where they would raise four daughters, and he would practice veterinary medicine for the next 28 years.

Edith and Wallace were engaged in the community. Together they square-danced and often hosted parties, featuring laughter, cards and home-made ice cream. Edith opened the "Tiger's Den," a safe place for teenagers to hang out. She helped bring Girl Scouting, Children's Theater, and the foreign exchange program to Gillett. She enjoyed her weekly oil painting group.

In 1984, Wallace sold his veterinary practice to work for the USDA which sent them to live in several different states. With retirement, they returned to northern Wisconsin, where they celebrated 50 years of marriage. Following Wallace's death in 2002, Edith bought a home in De Pere, Wisconsin where she lived and played until spring 2019. Edith then returned to her birth state to live her final years near her daughter Amy, in Clarion, Pennsylvania.

Edith is survived by three daughters and their partners: Nancy Buchan (Joe Roderick), Terrie Sue Townsend (Joe Bresette) and Amy (Sean) Esterhuizen. She leaves seven grandchildren: Blake (Cindy) and Bif Buchan, Luke (Marlene Kitchen) and Casey (Morgan) Brandemuehl, Bridget Esterhuizen (Tyler Crawford) and Hans (Karla) Esterhuizen, and Kelton Lepak. Edith also leaves twelve great-grandchildren; Emily B., Leah B., Claire B.; Madden B., Ali B., Heidi S., and Sarah S.; Miller B. and Veda B.; Freya C. and Sable C.; Layla E., Maxine E., and Daphne E.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by her daughter, Karen Townsend (Eugene "Geno" Lepak), in 2013.

The Robert V. Burns Funeral Home in Clarion, Pennsylvania is assisting the family.

The family will hold a Remembrance Celebration at the Tabor United Methodist Church in Gillett, Wisconsin on Saturday, September 13, 2025 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Please direct memorials to Gillett Public Schools, Gillett Area Historical Museum, or a donation recipient of your choice.

Tribute Wall

NH

“ Dear Amy,
So very sorry for your loss You're all in my thoughts...
Nancy Hougard

Nancy Hougard - September 13, 2025 at 01:28 PM

AE

Thank you so much Nancy. She was a fun Mom. I'm glad you knew her.

Amy Esterhuizen - December 15, 2025 at 11:04 PM

NB

“ She was a grand woman, who touched a lot of lives. She was determined in her decisions and loyal in her friendships. She went through life attacking and over coming the challenges and she enjoyed thoroughly her friends and social life. She thrived on afternoon bridge, bunco, book club, gatherings, any event which brought together friends to share a cup of tea, a sweet treat and plenty of conversation. She loved the freedom of the water and tried to swim everyday, it refreshed her and made her feel young. She will be greatly missed by many.

Nancy L. Buchan - September 10, 2025 at 05:07 AM

AE

Beautifully said Nancy 

Amy Esterhuizen - December 15, 2025 at 11:09 PM