



## Flowers of the Forest

**Ellen Marie Kangas • CMSI # 125**  
**April 9, 1919 - December 23, 2021**



Ellen Marie Kangas of Buchanan, Michigan, wife, mother, sister, devout Christian, volunteer and Buchanan community supporter died peacefully *fl*ursday morning, December 23, 2021 having achieved the remarkable age of 102 years. Her relatives and friends are grateful for the kind and compassionate care provided by the staffs of Buchanan Meadows and Caring Circle Hospice.

She was born on April 9, 1919 in Buchanan to John and May (Rowley) Montgomery and graduated from Buchanan High School. She continued her education with college classes to improve her vocational skills, and classes in religion and Bible study. She was employed by the Buchanan Community Schools as the executive secretary to the superintendent of schools.

Marie was a member of the former First Christian Church in South Bend, Indiana, and has been a regular attender of the First United Methodist Church in South Bend. *fl*rough those congregations she became a volunteer at the Downtown Soup Kitchen of South Bend and the United Religious Community (URC) of South Bend.

In Buchanan, she volunteered at Redbud Area Ministries, the Buchanan Art Center, Michigan Blood Center and at the former Pawating Hospital Auxiliary (now Spectrum Health Lakeland Niles). She also volunteered at Stark Elementary School, reading to the students, and was a member of the Friends of Oakridge Cemetery.

In 2009, she received the Redbud Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Buchanan Chamber of Commerce; and in 2017 she was named to the Buchanan High School

Hall of Fame for her contributions to society.

Beyond the local church and community, **Marie was a member of the Clan Montgomery International**, *fl*e National Smithsonian Institution, the Finland Society International, the Arbor Day Foundation and the Mental Health Association of Michigan.

She traveled to Finland to visit relatives, and found herself teaching English to them while there. She also toured Ireland and Scotland. She continued to drive – quite well and quite independently – beyond 90 years old, traveling to South Bend for her activities there. In Buchanan she was known to travel on foot, walking to Stark School, and to the post office. When she “retired” from reading at Stark, the students walked to her house, presented a gift of a rhododendron plant and serenaded Marie with song.

Marie was *fl*rst married to Dale Baker who worked in the Buchanan offices of Clark Equipment and served in ministry at the Christian Church. Mr. Baker died sadly unexpectedly young on May 23 1961. On July 2, 1965 in South Bend she married Edward Kangas, a Buchanan school teacher who preceded her in death on August 1, 1994.

She was also preceded in death by her daughter, Carol Baker on May 24, 2019; and by her siblings, John Montgomery in 2004, Paul Montgomery in 2006, William Montgomery in 2015 and Ruthe Halbritter in 2016. She is survived by many nieces and nephews, and a great circle of wonderful friends from church and community including Karen Rieder who has been providing her care.

*fl*e funeral service for Marie Kangas was held on Monday, December 27, 2021 at the Halbritter-Wickens Funeral Home, with the Rev. Mary L. Hubbard, honorably retired from the First United Methodist of South Bend, officiating.

One-hundred-two years is a remarkable lifespan of extra-Biblical measure, made all the more remarkable by the manner in which Marie used the blessing of those years: caring for folks at the soup kitchen, those in the hospital and at the blood bank, family in Finland, and students at the school down the street. All an inspiring testimony of our command to love God and love people