



**Birth**  
April 29, 1928

**Baptism**  
May 27, 1928

**Profession**  
July 29, 1950

**Death**  
April 15, 2016

**Burial**  
Sancta Maria  
in Ripa Cemetery  
St. Louis, Missouri

*Precious and blessed is  
the death of the faithful  
before God... for  
they die in union with  
their dear Jesus, in the  
grace of God, in peace.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger  
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame  
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Elizabeth (Karen Joseph) Lakin, SSND

The fourth child of Catherine (Dolfing) and Harold Lakin was born on April 29, 1928 in Ziegler, Illinois. She was baptized on May 27, 1928 at Sacred Heart Church in Zielger and named Elizabeth Catherine. Two sisters and one brother preceded her into the Lakin household.

At the age of six, Elizabeth (Liz) began her formal education at Ziegler Grade School. In the fifth grade, she became interested in playing the alto saxophone and baton twirling. Every year after that, she went to district and state contests and won medals. She entered Ziegler Community High School and became a member of the choristers. During her sophomore year, her parents decided to move to St. Louis, Missouri in order to give their children more opportunities. Liz chose to follow her two sisters and enrolled at the Academy of Notre Dame in Belleville, Illinois as a boarder. She continued her interest in music, especially piano. She was also attracted to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, her teachers.

Following graduation, Liz worked in sales at Sears Roebuck Company in St. Louis for two years. She entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa on Aug. 29, 1947. After one year of college studies, she was missioned to Annunciation in Bogalusa, Louisiana to teach first and second grades. During the year, one of the sisters became ill and Liz was promoted to fifth and sixth grades and placed in charge of music at the parish. Returning to St. Louis, she was received as a novice on July 28, 1949 and given the name, Karen Joseph. She professed first vows on July 29, 1950 and final vows on July 29, 1956.

For the next 22 years, she taught elementary students at Sacred Heart, Fort Madison, Iowa: St. Francis Solanus, Quincy and Sacred Heart, Effingham in Illinois; St. Charles Borromeo, St. Charles, St. Liborius and St. Dominic Savio, St. Louis, All Souls, Overland and St. Michael, Shrewsbury in Missouri. Later, she would teach at Rosary High School and Prep Seminary North in St. Louis.

She received a bachelor's degree in education at the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis in 1958 and master's degree in education at St. Louis University in 1965.

A second career began when she was activities director at Chariton Apartments in St. Louis. This experience with the elderly followed by a grant to study gerontology, serving as a staff member at Villa Gesu and pastoral ministry at St. Christopher, St. Louis, Missouri enabled her to use her gifts for the elderly. She became a nursing home ombudsman development specialist for the Missouri Office of Aging. She established a program in each of Missouri's 10 Area Agencies on Aging, providing technical assistance, training and resource development.

In 1990, she entered another career in her development, that of travel agent. She worked for four years with several agencies learning the intricacies of managing and operating a travel agency. In 1995, she established the non-

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# In Loving Memory



*Sister Elizabeth Lakin*



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profit Notre Dame Travel agency. This enabled her to work with airlines, cruise and travel companies as well as travel herself. During this time, she visited almost every country in the world and all seven continents. She said, "Some people work because it is a job...But I work because I love it." She especially enjoyed accompanying tours with senior citizens. However, after 9/11, the travel industry slowed and commissions decreased. Finally, in 2004, the agency was sold.

After a sabbatical, Sister Liz did community service at the former St. Louis motherhouse and spent time working on her family history project, including contacting relatives in England, France and Germany. In 2013, she was missioned to Veronica House. She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in March 2016 and died peacefully on April 15, 2016.

A prayer service was held at The Sarah Community chapel on April 29, 2016 (on her 88th birthday) followed by a social. Her sister-in-law, Marianne Lakin, nephews, nieces and other relatives were present. Also attending were former students, friends, sisters and residents at The Sarah Community.

To accommodate her nephews, nieces and other relatives the memorial Mass will be celebrated at Theresa Center on June 25, 2016. Her cremains will be buried in the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery. Sister Liz was preceded in death by her parents; her brother William and her sisters Rose Marie Lakin and Mary Ann Cassani.

Sister Liz had an appreciation of music which remained throughout her lifetime. She was an excellent organizer and loved to put on plays and shows. An outgoing person, she was very welcoming to guests. Family members were very important to her. She was known for placing flowers on the graves of the deceased relatives and assisted her siblings whenever she could. She had a great love for the elderly and was an advocate for them. Her travels gave her a world-view and appreciation of other cultures. May she now rejoice in her new life with God and her family members!

*By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND*