

Laura Ruth Kehle Harms, 85, passed away Friday, March 14, 2008.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, she grew up in Ohio and graduated from DeVilbiss High School. She and her husband, John, moved to Michigan after marrying in 1943, where John made a living designing and building filtration systems for the Big Three Auto Makers after his honorable discharge from the Army. Laura was able to spend her time with their two children, Theresa Lyn and John Frederick II. During the winters of the early 1950s, the family would escape to Palm Beach County, and in 1954, the snow was too high for John to shovel so they moved to West Palm Beach. (The six-foot long Kingfish John caught during their last visit probably had something to do with it, too.) Their second son, Harold Henry II, was born after their move to Florida.

In the late 1950s, John recognized the need for quality swimming pool filters and with Laura's help, soon was building cartridge filtration equipment in their West Palm Beach home. Laura's dedication to the fledgling family business resulted in the American dream where hard work and a good idea has created an American family business that is now over 50 years old.

Laura will be missed by family, friends and hundreds of employees spanning her business years. She was the anchor for her family and provided a focal point and encouragement for John until his death in 2004.

Laura is survived by her daughter, Terri Stenger, son-in-law, Larry, grandson, Larry, and granddaughter-in-law, Sherene of Littleton, Colo., grandson, Chris, and great-grandson, Jared of Summerville, S.C.; granddaughter, Lauren, of Franklin, her son, John Frederick Harms II, daughter-in-law, Susie, grandsons, David and John III, granddaughter-in-law, Whitney, and great-granddaughter, Helena, granddaughter Lydia Wilkie, grandson-in-law, Jason of West Palm Beach, Fla.; son, Hank Harms, daughter-in-law Dodi, grandsons Jimmy and Tommy of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.; her sisters, Helen Thurlow of Punta Gorda, Fla., Marge Bowe of Oak Harbor, Ohio, and Addie Patterson of Jupiter, Fla., and their families; her sister-in-law, Mary Lou Kehle of River Ranch, Fla., and her family; and the children of her brother Anthony.

She was predeceased by her husband, John Frederick Harms; and her two brothers, Anthony George Kehle II and John Paul Kehle.

A memorial service to celebrate Laura's life is planned for June 14, 2008.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Laura's name to Hospice of Palm Beach County, 5300 East Ave., West Palm Beach, FL 33407.

The Franklin Press, 19 March 2008