



## Stephanie A. Bak

September 27, 2015

Stephanie A. (Chmiel) Bak, 90, our beloved Mom, Babci, Cioci, and family matriarch went to her eternal rest on September 27, 2015. Born and raised in Chicopee, Steffie was the youngest of six children, and the only daughter of Walenty and Aniela (Kotula) Chmiel. Her five older brothers adored her and Stef often said they would always try to give her whatever she wanted. As a young girl, she enjoyed sewing her own clothes, ice skating on the rinks and ponds in Chicopee, and helping her mother prepare classic Polish foods for the family. After graduation from Chicopee High School in 1942, she went to work in the family business. Steffie was a very talented seamstress, helping to run Val's Cleaners and Tailoring, operated by her father in Chicopee Center. In fact, that is where she met her future husband John, who spotted her through the large tailor shop window. After several days admiring her from afar, he decided that the best way to meet her would be to bring in a pair of pants to be altered. That led to their first date and a marriage that lasted 44 years, until John passed away. Together they enjoyed Sunday afternoon drives, Polka festivals, and visiting the Jersey Shore, Florida, and Poland. They built their dream home in Chicopee, where they raised their two children, Joanne and Bob, and hosted countless family gatherings and celebrations. Her favorite was Wigilia, the traditional Polish Christmas Eve supper. Every year she singlehandedly made hundreds of cabbage, cheese, and potato and cheese pierogi to enjoy that evening, and she made certain that everyone had some to take home. She was thrilled, when in recent years, younger family

members joined her in the pierogi making. The “master classes” she gave ensured that her recipes and techniques would be preserved, and the tradition would continue. She was an accomplished baker, and made dozens of birthday cakes for her children and grandchildren, along with her specialties of Boston cream pie, fruit pies, and cheesecake. She was always very giving of her time and talents, and sewing or altering clothes for her family was something that she was always happy to do. Her kindness, gentle manner, selflessness, and warmth will be remembered by all those whose lives she touched. She was a lifelong communicant of the Basilica of St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr, and a member of its Rosary Society. She was also a member of the Polish Womens’ Alliance of America. Stephanie was predeceased in 2003 by her beloved husband, John J. Bak, and is survived by her loving children, Joanne T. Burke and her husband, Francis, of Nashua, NH and Robert J. Bak and his wife, Pamela, of South Hadley; four cherished grandchildren, Laura and David Burke and Melissa and Brian Bak; godchildren, Jack Chmiel and Eleanor Chmiel; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brothers, Stanley, Joseph, John, Walter and Fred Chmiel. Funeral services for Stephanie will be held Saturday at 9AM at Kozikowski Funeral Home, 565 Front St., Chicopee, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10AM in St. Stanislaus Basilica. Burial will follow in St. Stanislaus Cemetery. Calling hours are Friday from 4-7PM. Memorial contributions may be made in Stephanie’s memory to the Dana Farber Cancer Institute Boston Marathon team at the following link: <http://www.runDFMC.org/2016/laurakburke>. All contributions will support the Claudia Barr Innovative Cancer Research Center at Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

# Cemetery Details

## St. Stanislaus Cemetery-

800 Montgomery St.  
Chicopee, MA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT 2. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Kozikowski Funeral Home  
565 Front Street  
Chicopee, MA 01013  
(413) 592-9256  
kozikowskifh@gmail.com

## Service

OCT 3. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Stanislaus Basilica\_  
566 Front St.  
Chicopee, MA