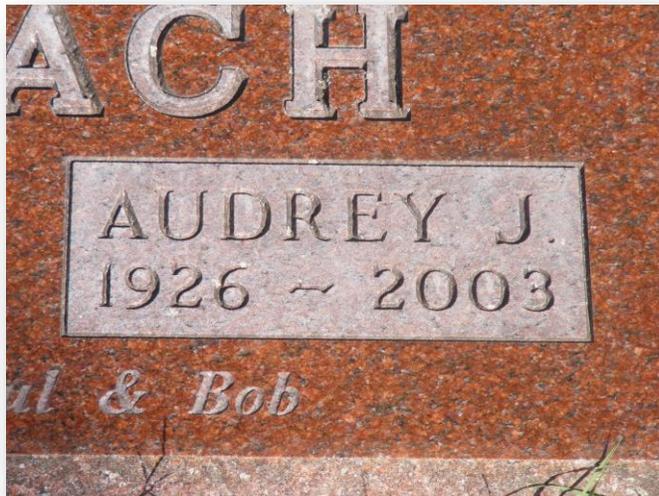


## *Audrey J. Dernbach*

Audrey J. Dernbach, 77, of Eau Claire, known as the “Lazy Eye Lady” passed away Friday, May 30, 2003 at Dove Healthcare from complications of Parkinson’s disease.



She was born in Nekoosa on February 11, 1926 the daughter of Arthur and Clara (Hoekstra) Retzlaff, graduated from Lincoln High School in Wisconsin Rapids and received a diploma from Columbia Hospital School of Nursing in 1947.

Audrey married Robert “Bob” W. Dernbach at the Little

Brown Church in the Vale at Nashua, IA on March 28, 1951. She worked as a Registered Nurse at Riverview Hospital in Wisconsin Rapids, Veterans Hospital in Tomah, Luther Hospital in Eau Claire and taught health careers at District One Technical Institute.

Her life’s work, besides being a wife and mother, was making parents of small children aware of an eye disease called Amblyopia, or “Lazy Eye.” Audrey was passionate about this work because if a child is afflicted with the disease and not treated at an early age, he or she will eventually lose sight in the Lazy Eye.

After finding that her oldest son, John, was afflicted with the disease, she along with John Bacharach who was the Director of the Eau Claire City-County Health Department and Anabel Airis, another Registered Nurse, started a central screening program for preschool children. A home screening kit was developed and Audrey personally called on 1,000 homes in the county to test children. She wrote a simple story about parents detecting Lazy Eye which her friend, Lois Cameron rhymed and a friend Erol Mki, illustrated and the booklet “Charlie’s Lazy Eye” was born. The booklet has traveled all over the United States, South America and Europe, has been translated into several languages and is currently available at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department.

She received many awards for her efforts, including the Theodora Youmans Citizenship Award of the Wisconsin Federation of Women's Clubs; the Volunteer Award of the National Center for Voluntary Action at which time she was congratulated in the Rose Garden by President Gerald Ford; the American Legion Auxiliary Award; Sacred Heart Hospital award for Lazy Eye Week; the Eau Claire Exchange Club Book of Golden Deeds Award; the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award; and the Columbia Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Award.

Audrey is survived by her husband of over 50 years, Bob; three sons, John (Kathryn) of Harrisburg, PA, Paul (Mary Jo) of Naples, FL and Bob Jr. (Jeanne) of Lakeville, MN; two grandsons, Joey and Matthew; five granddaughters, Becky, Tessie, Sarah, Elizabeth and Kathryn; brother, James of Wisconsin Rapids; sister, Dorothy Ricci of Morrisonville, NY; nieces Barbara Bissonnette of Winooski, VT and Cynthia Weston of Lake Mills; and nephews Dan and Jeff Retzlaff, both of Madison.

Memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, June 3, 2003 at Sacred Heart Hospital Chapel with Father Edmund Klimek and Reverend Schuyler H. Van Gordon officiating. Family and friends may call from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday at Lenmark-Gomsrud-Linn Funeral Home where a 7 p.m public prayer vigil will be held and one hour prior to services Tuesday at Sacred Heart Hospital Chapel.

To send flowers or a memorial gift to the family of Audrey Dernbach please visit our Sympathy Store.

