

Ohio couple married 70 years die 15 hours apart



They remained deeply in love until the very end, even eating breakfast together while holding hands, said their daughter, Linda Cody.

"We knew when one went, the other was going to go," she said.

According to Cody, about 12 hours after Helen died, Kenneth looked at his children and said, "Mom's dead." He quickly began to fade and was surrounded by 24 of his closest family members and friends when he died the next morning.



"He was ready," Cody said. "He just didn't want to leave her here by herself."

Son Dick Felumlee said his parents died of old age, surrounded by family.

"At Dad's bed we were singing his favorite hymns, reading scriptures and praying with him," he told The Associated Press in an email. "It was a going away party, and we know he loved it."

The pair had known each other for several years when they eloped in Newport, Ky., across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, on Feb. 20, 1944. At two days shy of his 21st birthday, Kenneth — who went by Kenny — was too young to marry in Ohio.

"He couldn't wait," son Jim Felumlee said.

Kenneth worked as a railroad car inspector and mechanic before becoming a mail carrier for the Nashport Post Office. He was active in his Nashport-Irville United Methodist Church as a Sunday school teacher.

Helen stayed at home, not only cooking and cleaning for her own family but also for other families in need in the area. She taught Sunday school, too, but was known more for her greeting card ministry, sending cards for birthdays, sympathy and the holidays to everyone in her community, each with a personal note inside.



In this Dec. 29, 2012, photo provided by Dick Felumlee, Kenneth and Helen Felumlee, seated, of Nashport, Ohio., in central Ohio pose for a photo with their eight children. The Felumlees, who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in February, died 15 hours apart from each other last week.

"She kept Hallmark in business," daughter-in-law Debbie Felumlee joked.

When Kenneth retired in 1983 and the children began to leave the house, the Felumlees began to explore their love of travel, visiting almost all 50 states by bus.

"He didn't want to fly anywhere because you couldn't see anything as you were going," Jim Felumlee said.

Although both experienced declining health in recent years, Cody said, each tried to stay strong for the other.

"That's what kept them going," she said.