



Clara Hazel von Gontard

March 4, 1929 - May 11, 2025

Clara Hazel, affectionately and adoringly known to so many as "Baby", passed away at the age of 96 after an incredible life well lived. She is preceded in death by her parents, Adalbert "Woky" von Gontard Sr. & Susanne (nee Schilling von Cannstatt) and her brothers, Adalbert "Adie" von Gontard Jr. of Greenwich, CT and Paul Victor von Gontard of Huntleigh, MO. Clara is survived by her children Thomas V. Seherr-Thoss of Scottsdale, AZ, Gabrielle L. Seherr-Thoss of Huntleigh, MO & Susanne G. Mulholland of Warson Woods, MO. She is also survived by those who lovingly referred to her as "Omie" - her grandchildren Ashley (Gary) Miller, Erika (Mike) Lanzarini, Alexandria "Lexie" (Alex) Frantz, Theodore "TJ" Mulholland, and her great-grandchildren Aiden & Elise Jajko, Annabelle Miller and Nikolas "Niko" & Shane Lanzarini.

Born to German immigrants, "Baby" grew up in a family who valued ambition, hard work, loyalty, fairness & tradition. Her great-grandfather was Adolphus Busch Sr., the founder of Anheuser-Busch Co., her grandfather was the Baron Paul von Gontard, president of Mercedes-Benz & Manser Motor Company and her father was Adalbert "Woky" von Gontard, a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy, engineer, Senior Executive Vice President and Vice Chairman of the Board at Anheuser-Busch.

"Baby" was raised in Huntleigh, MO and attended Mary Institute for her

elementary and high school education (Class of 1947). Upon graduation, Clara moved east to attend Chevy Chase Junior College in Maryland. There she was a member of the Spanish Club, Panel Club, Athletic Association and the Tennis and Field Hockey teams. She was a versatile member of her class, excelling in sports and horseback riding. An "unbeatable personality and feminine daredevil" Clara was known and remembered for her loyalty both to school and to her friends.

Upon returning to St. Louis, Miss Clara Hazel, "Baby" of the family and her parents only daughter, was introduced to society in the most elaborate fashion. Her Garden Fete Debut - a rose ball called "Stairway to the Stars" - was the talk of the town for months and years to come. It took place at her parents' home, among her mother's prize winning rose gardens, with 800 guests in attendance. The stairs and peach trees were adorned with thousands of peach-shaped, peach-colored lights and 5,000 roses were entwined around pillars and pergolas. It was truly spectacular.

Following a brief engagement and her 1954 wedding to Count Herman L. von Seherr-Thoss Jr. in New York, Clara moved to Jackson Hole, WY to start a family. It was here that her first two children - Thomas "Tom" Victor & Gabrielle Lilly - were born. All participated and enjoyed life on the ranch. Cattle cutting & branding, irrigation and bailing hay were some of the typical chores they performed together. Clara was a member of the Elks Lodge and enjoyed snow skiing, dog sledding and snowmobiling during her leisure time in Wyoming.

In 1962, Clara moved back to Huntleigh to be close to her parents and to continue raising her children in her hometown. After her mother passed away suddenly, in 1966, she stepped into that role as best as she could, helping support her father with his business & social engagements. They enjoyed many activities together including, traveling, horseback riding, fox hunting, charity events, benefits and balls. Also, in 1966, Clara married John F. Steinlage, grandson of Quality Dairy President John G. Steinlage, and in 1968

her dearest "lovechild" as she often referred to her, Susanne "Susie" Gertrude, was born.

Throughout the years, Clara was a member of the German American Heritage Society, Coaching Club, Christian Women's Club and High Hopes Syndicate - highlighting just a few of her favorites - as well as, the longest standing member at the Racquet Club Ladue. She also volunteered at St. John's Mercy hospital, Missouri Botanical Gardens, St. Louis Science Center, the Junior League of St. Louis and many other organizations. Baby and her best friend, Trudy Busch, thoroughly enjoyed their time together as members of the Madhatter's Club, as well as their walks at Grant's Farm, traveling to Switzerland and time aboard the Anheuser-Busch Yacht with Baby's father and his first cousin, August "Gussie" Busch Jr., husband of Trudy. Perhaps by divine intervention, Baby and Trudy both passed away on the same day, May 11, nine years apart.

If Clara wasn't volunteering or giving back to her community then you could bet she was probably hosting a party. Clara was a party planning extraordinaire. No detail overlooked, no expense spared - even in her final days she was giving instructions about invitations, flowers, place settings and party favors. She truly possessed the art of entertaining and was generous beyond compare. You'd be hard pressed to find anyone who knew her that hasn't received Bissingers Chocolate, Honey Baked Ham, Edible Arrangements, Fresh Flowers or a handwritten card.

That generosity and care certainly extended to her family. Above all else, her greatest pride and her endless joy came from her time spent with them. Whether it be teaching them Chopsticks on the piano, attending dance recitals or graduations, hosting & most definitely toasting at birthday parties or baptisms, you could always count on Omie to show up and show out. She

enjoyed traveling with her children and grandchildren to places like Canada, Europe and Bora Bora. They played Backgammon, tennis, bowling and golf. She taught them to ride horses and speak German. Baby wasn't just a mother to her three children, she was a mother (and grandmother) to their friends too. If you were lucky enough to know her, you were lucky enough to call her family.

More than a list of accomplishments or accolades, we want to remember how Clara made us feel. With a personality larger than life, she never met a stranger. Baby wined and dined with royalty & celebrities, she rubbed elbows with presidents, diplomats & dignitaries, but, she was genuinely interested in the lives and feelings of everyone. She wanted all to feel loved and included because, even larger than her personality, was her heart. With a true heart of gold, Baby was loved and adored by all who knew her. At 96 years old, so many of her friends and family members had long since passed, but you couldn't tell. She was constantly surrounded by a host of people whom she loved and that also loved her. While her loss has left an enormous hole in the hearts and lives of those she has left behind, her legacy of love, of strength and of kindness will endure forever.

Please join us at the Chapel Hill Mortuary & Oak Hill Cemetery located at 10301 Big Bend Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122 to CELEBRATE THE LIFE of Clara Hazel Alice von Gontard. The visitation will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2025 from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. and the service will be held on Friday, June 6, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. Clara wanted all in attendance to sleep in on Friday, ensuring they'd be ready to dance the night away!! Please wear BRIGHT colors in honor of our sweet Clara, Baby, Omie.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to BreakthroughT1D (https://www2.breakthrough1d.org/site/Donation2?23538.donation=form1&df_id=23538&mfc_pref=T?utm_source=google_cpc&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=FDRS_

20240701_SEM_EG_GS_EM_v1&s_src=google_cpc&s_subsrc=FDRS_2024
0701_SEM_EG_GS_EM_v1&s_src=FDRS-FY25-PRMY-google_cpc&s_subsr
c=168099367407-breakthrough%20t1d-e-705118411840&gad_source=1&gad
_campaignid=21453273592&gbraid=0AAAAADqPFSJQ_IxlgLRzOkm5vT39X
FiIN&gclid=Cj0KCQjwiqbBBhCAARIsAJSfZkYbPV7qxrsK-1rT-vXGQQEkge2y
bmHeViBTLsDIKQh3k_udeKGw7QYaAhTeEALw_wcB) (formerly
Breakthrough Type 1 Diabetes (Formerly JDRF)) and the Crohns & Colitis
Foundation (https://crohnscolitisfoundation.donorsupport.co/page/AD-SEM-MATCH?utm_source=google&utm_medium=paidsearch&utm_campaign=WIBD-DDR&utm_content=wibdd-brand-donate&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=21389714869&gbraid=0AAAAADsIbaMSGx_lq5Xd8uefoTNBmeJHR&gclid=Cj0KCQjwiqbBBhCAARIsAJSfZkbZzFDzYwzk-w_ADvgrJAX7PQpr0n9KhOSDIqAd-iy5614hYwPs_SwaAsa0EALw_wcB).

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 5. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Chapel Hill Mortuary - Kirkwood
10301 Big Bend Road
Kirkwood, MO 63122
(314) 965-8228
info@stlfuneral.com
<https://www.stlfuneral.com>

Funeral Ceremony

JUN 6. 4:00 PM (CT)

Chapel Hill Mortuary - Kirkwood
10301 Big Bend Road
Kirkwood, MO 63122
(314) 965-8228
info@stlfuneral.com
<https://www.stlfuneral.com>

Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Clara Hazel von Gontard.

June 05, 2025 at 02:18 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Clara Hazel von Gontard.



June 05, 2025 at 02:18 PM



“ Luskie, Tracy, Katie & Nick purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Clara Hazel von Gontard.



Luskie, Tracy, Katie & Nick - May 29, 2025 at 11:35 AM