



Claretta Ayers

September 1, 1925 - March 19, 2017

Claretta Ayers, 91, passed away Sunday, March 19, 2017, at her home in Corvallis, Oregon.

Claretta was born September 1, 1925, in Kelso, Washington, to George and Alice Moen. She moved with her family to Missoula, Montana, when she was in the 5th grade. She spent many wonderful, adventure-filled summers on the Longpre family ranch up the Nine Mile. She attended Hellgate High School for a year before enrolling in Canyonville Bible Academy, a boarding Christian high school in Canyonville, Oregon. It was there she met her future husband and the love of her life, Harry. They were married in Anaconda, Montana, on her 18th birthday.

Shortly after their marriage, Harry joined the Navy and served in the South Pacific during World War II. Claretta remained in Montana and their first daughter, Marybeth, was born while Harry was at sea. At the end of his military service, he completed Bible college in Seattle and he and Claretta started their 60 years of ministry for the Assemblies of God. Their first church was in Stevensville, Montana. They went on to pastor churches in the Oregon towns of Vale, Klamath Falls, Springfield, Pendleton, and Rogue River. From 1955 to 1964, they pastored 1st Assembly of God in Grants Pass Oregon, which later became Parkway Christian Center. Claretta and Harry returned as interim pastors at Parkway from 1991 to 1994. They also pastored in West Seattle, Washington, Missoula, Montana, and Nikiski, Alaska, before finally retiring from the ministry in 2008. Claretta and Harry celebrated their 73rd wedding anniversary in September of 2016.

Claretta loved being a pastor's wife. It had been her dream as a young girl to serve the Lord as a pastor's wife or a missionary. Everyone who knew her would say she showed amazing love, grace, and kindness in that role. She loved calling on people with gifts of homemade soup, bread, and custards. She loved Christian music and singing and playing songs of worship were her greatest joy. Though other memories faded for Claretta, the words and melodies of the old hymns never left her. In nearly sixty years in the ministry, there was never a time that she would rather be anywhere else but in church. She also loved hunting and fishing with Harry.

She was preceded in death by husband, her parents and her three brothers, George (Mike) Moen, Elmer (Bud) Moen, and Oliver (Buster) Moen. She is survived by her three daughters: Marybeth Michalsen (Dan) of Ketchikan, Alaska, JoAnn Bethany of Corvallis, Oregon, and Judy Adams (Alan) of Kennewick, Washington.

She is also survived by eleven grandchildren, Erik Michalsen (Mavi), Danielle Whitaker (Alex), Scott Kemp (Pansy), Chris Kemp, Matt Kemp (Amanda), Laura Soerheide, Ryan Harrington (Rachel), Jeremy Harrington (Toni), Kim Adams, Julie Ferguson (Brian), and Missi Hilding (Michael). She was blessed to welcome nineteen great-children into her life.

She will be buried with her husband at the Willamette National Cemetery in Portland with her family in attendance. A memorial service for Harry and Claretta will be held at Christian Life Center in Missoula, Montana, at a later date.