



Bessie I. Gerdes

April 12, 1922 - June 17, 2013

Bessie Irene Gerdes of Corvallis died June 17 at age 91.

She was born April 12, 1922, in Hutchinson, Kan., to Glenn and Mary Bale. The oldest of eight, she dropped out of school to care for younger siblings when her father took ill. In 1941 she married Paul Gerdes. They raised 10 children, living most of that time in the Sacramento Valley. They remained devoted partners until Paul's death in 2002.

Bessie was an energetic wife and mother, active with family and community. She believed her children are her greatest achievement. At age 50, she realized her dream to earn a diploma, graduating from the same high school as three of her sons. Retirement years were spent in Riverbank, Calif., where she and Paul joined seniors clubs to dance and socialize. Bessie was vice president of Riverbank Seniors for two terms.

Bessie was no less active at Samaritan Village in Corvallis, where she and Paul moved in 1999: ace bingo caller, committee memberships and bus trips. Bessie was an outspoken advocate and an avid reader, puzzler and quilter.

Survivors include her children, Mary (Marshall) Fairless of Diamond City, Ark., Janey (Don) Ellis of Shingle Springs, Calif., Carma (Curt) Dunn of Greenfield, Mo., Lois (Dennis) Bousquet of Albany, Robert (Jenni) Gerdes of Sherman

Oaks, Calif., Allen Gerdes of Reno, Nev., Glenn Gerdes of Corvallis, Linda Stewart of Corvallis, Diana (Dave) Smith of Salem and Roger Gerdes of Springfield, Mo.; 27 grandchildren; 61 great- and great-great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews; and her youngest sister, Louise McSwan of Roseville, Calif.

A service conducted by family was held June 22 at Salas Brothers Chapel in Modesto, Calif. Burial was at Lakewood Memorial Park, Hughson.

Remembrances can be made to the Mennonite Village Foundation in Albany, where Bessie was lovingly cared for in her last months.

We'll miss you, Mom.

Tribute Wall

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“ Please accept my sympathy on the loss of your mother and grandmother. I got to know Bessie quite well when we both lived at Samaritan Village in Corvallis, and in fact we frequently sat at the same lunch table. Bessie was a lively and congenial presence, and great fun. I know you will miss her, but how wonderful to remember that she lived a long and productive life.

Suzanne Stultz

Suzanne Stultz - June 27, 2013 at 09:41 PM