



Reva Waddell

September 11, 1926 - December 15, 2012

Several years ago, Reva Harriett White Waddell excitedly told friends about a tall young man she had seen at the Goodwill store: “He was 8 feet tall if he was an inch!”

In the years since then, there were, like Bigfoot, several unconfirmed sightings. Quilting, not photography, was Reva’s passion. Reva passed away on Saturday, Dec. 15, still hoping for just one more sighting with her know-it-all nephew there to witness it.

Reva was the youngest of three children born to Oscar Earl “Doc” White and Louise Christine Catharine Stienke White. She was born on Sept. 11, 1926, on their farm in Fillmore County, Neb. — midway between McCool Junction and Fairmont — where the family farmed a quarter section.

In 1940 the family pulled up stakes and moved to Corvallis, joining Reva’s brother’s family and the numerous relatives and friends who preceded them. Her parents found work at Oregon State College, and Reva completed her education walking to Corvallis Junior High School and Corvallis Senior High School from their home on South 10th Street. Times have changed.

She earned spending money baby-sitting for 25 to 50 cents a night, and working at the Sunnybrook Restaurant (where the Broken Yolk is today) and serving meals at Waldo Hall on the Oregon State campus. Summers, she earned up to \$40 for back-to-school clothes by working in the bean yards and the hop yards. She fascinated the other workers with her ability to work with her long, impeccably manicured fingernails.

Like many others on the home front during World War II, Reva corresponded with servicemen overseas, and ended up marrying one: Orville Herbert Waddell, a sailor. They were married in her parents' living room on April 29, 1945, while Orv was on survivor's leave after enduring kamikaze attacks on his ship. The newlyweds lived in Oakland, Calif., near the navy base, until Orv accumulated the points he needed for his discharge and their return to Corvallis.

As a civilian, Orv became a body and fender man, and Reva worked for Dr. Emil Howard, who had offices on South Second Street by the Majestic Theatre.

Their first child, Pamela Kay, was born in 1946 at Corvallis General Hospital, perhaps the first of Reva's line to be born in a hospital. In 1950 the young family moved to Homer, Territory of Alaska, where Orv had relatives. (They never knew Jewel, but they knew her parents and grandparents. They never knew Tom Bodett either. He came later.) They stayed in Homer for 25 years. Orv continued to work as a body and fender man, and Reva worked in a gift shop. She became an accomplished knitter, something she could do in the dark in the movie theater, knitting items she could sell.

A second daughter, Celeste Marie, was born in 1955, and a son, Wade Aaron, was born in 1962. Their 25 years in Homer were quiet and uneventful until the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake. On Easter Sunday, Reva wrote about the impact of the earthquake and its aftermath on them and on Homer. It was an excellent account then, and it remains an excellent account today.

In the 1970s the family left Homer and returned to the Lower 48, living briefly in Montrose, Colo., where Reva managed a gift shop, before moving back to Oregon and settling in Otis in Lincoln County. Orv worked for the Lincoln County School District and Reva worked at a Lincoln City motel. After Orv's death in 1988 and with the kids out of school and on their own, Reva moved back to Corvallis, near her brother's family.

At her sister-in-law's suggestion, she joined Quilts from Caring Hands. She enjoyed her membership in QCH and the many friends she made in that

group. She said they were her salvation.

About the time of the 8-foot-tall young man sighting, Reva was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis and given a future that she faced bravely. Looking back over her 86 years, it can be said that the farm girl from Nebraska had lived an interesting life full of many experiences and many fond memories.

Survivors include daughter Pam Loge and husband Butch of Millsap, Texas; Celeste Cornish and husband Russell of Tombstone, Ariz.; grandson Scott Anderson of Millsap; grandson and granddaughter Max and Maddie Waddell of Salem; niece Delma (Lefler) Paul and husband Louis of Beatrice, Neb.; nephews Howard Lefler and wife Donna of Fairmont, Neb., Francis Lefler and wife Nancy of Loveland, Colo., Bill White, Gene and wife Quixie White of Corvallis, and niece Carolyn (White) Buono and husband Neil of Topeka, Kan.; and special friends Joelle Sonnichen of Portland, who cared for her son, Wade, during his terminal illness, Kathy Leopold of Salem, and Mary Stuart of Albany.

Preceding her in death were her husband; her parents; her brother, Donald White, and her good friend and confidante, sister-in-law Lorena White of Corvallis; her sister, Gladys Lefler of Fairmont; and her son, Wade of Salem. Reva's family extends its grateful thanks to her many friends at Quilts from Caring Hands who were so supportive during the end of her life; to Dr. James Gallant and the staff of Corvallis Internal Medicine; and to the staff of Odyssey Hospice of the Pacific Northwest. She requested that memorial contributions be made by mail to Quilts from Caring Hands at 922 N.W. Circle Blvd., Suite 160, PMB No. 238, Corvallis, OR 97330.