



## Zelma Irene Strawn

August 28, 1922 - December 1, 2013

Irene Strawn of Corvallis went home to be with her Lord on Sunday, Dec. 1, following a stroke she suffered several weeks ago.

Irene was born to Isaac Ernest and Emma Elena Lewis (Jenkins), in her grandmother's log cabin in Richland County, Mont. For her early schooling, she walked two miles to a one-room schoolhouse at Mona. The building also served as the church building where Irene's father led the weekly Bible study.

One summer, a traveling preacher named T.O. Chisholm came through the area. In her mid-teens, Irene was baptized into Christ by Mr. Chisholm in the waters of Charley Creek.

Irene was a faithful, involved member of the Church of Christ throughout her life, whether teaching children's Bible classes or serving people in numerous other ways. Her attitude of contentment through the twists and turns of life was shaped around the Bible verse "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength."

To attend high school, Irene lived in Brockton, on the opposite side of the Missouri River from her home. It was an Indian school on a major reservation that offered many courses and the opportunity for Irene to develop a fondness for basketball. Graduating at age 16 in 1939, Irene worked one year for the

school principal. In 1942, she moved to Seattle to work as a typist for the U.S. Army at the Port of Embarkation.

A first date with an Army military police officer named Walter, at the Paramount Theater in Seattle, ultimately led to their marriage in 1944.

During World War II, Walt and Irene lived in Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma. Eventually they settled in Astoria, where their first two children were born: Linda in 1944 and Troy in 1946. Stints in Grants Pass and Klamath Falls gave way to a move to Corvallis in October 1950. The Strawns purchased a business that came to be Strawn Office Equipment. It was located near campus on 16th Street.

Their third child, W. Gregg, was born in 1953 and grew up amidst the typewriters. Irene worked in the business as bookkeeper and sales clerk until her retirement in July 1987. She also did bookkeeping for the Church of Christ for 38 years, watching the church mature from its infancy to a stable congregation.

Following retirement, Irene and Walt enjoyed traveling to nearby scenes such as the coast, Foster Lake at Sweet Home, Black Butte and throughout the West. Canada, Mexico and several trips to Hawaii were also favorites. An annual jaunt to the Pendleton Round-Up became a fall-season tradition until Walter preceded Irene in death on March 19, 1998.

Years later, Irene's granddaughter wrote a winning article for a contest, about Irene's first date at the Paramount. That resulted in the two of them enjoying the prize of sightseeing in the city of New York.

Irene continued to be active in a women's Bible study group from church, gardening, and keeping her mind fresh with crossword and jigsaw puzzles as

well as the nightly challenge of “Jeopardy!” and “Wheel of Fortune.” In addition, she enjoyed watching TV when the Trail Blazers and the Beavers played basketball. She especially was excited when the Oregon State University men defeated “Eugene.” She never would call that team by name.

A stroke in November 2010 resulted in Irene’s moving to Park Place Assisted Living. The staff there superbly cared for her, especially in these last days while she was on hospice.

Family always was a gift Irene treasured. She is survived by one brother, Elmer Isaac Lewis of Vancouver, Wash.; a daughter, Linda Dulaney (and John) of Salem; and two sons, Troy Strawn (and Mimi) of Mountain Home, Ark., and W. Gregg Strawn (and Pam) of Corvallis. She leaves five grandchildren, Tami, Jennifer, Troy Jr., Jordan and Marissa; and four great-grandchildren.

Viewing is scheduled for 1 to 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 9, at McHenry Funeral Home. A memorial celebration of Irene’s life will take place at 1 p.m. Tuesday at Circle Church of Christ. Memorial offerings can be made to Benton Hospice Service or the University Christian Center in care of Circle Church of Christ.