

Jennie Frances Conaway Christenson, 95

July 12, 1904 - Oct. 24, 1999

JEWELL - Jennie Frances Conaway was born July 12, 1904, in Deep River, to Clement and Elizabeth (Beal) Conaway. She received her normal training and started teaching school at the age of 18. Her first teaching assignment was the Avon Lake District in Polk County in a one-room school. From there she moved to Griswold, and taught first grade. She then returned to school and received her bachelor's degree from Drake University in Des Moines, and subsequently went on to earn a master's degree from Ohio State University. During her career she also held teaching positions in Des Moines, Dubuque, Co. Bluffs and Harlan. In 1950 she moved to Rochester, MN. She taught first grade at Washington Elementary School. In 1960 she was the first woman to hold the position of principal in the Rochester School District. She was active in the Business and Professionals Women's Society in Minnesota, one year serving as state president. She was also a lifelong member of the Eastern Star organization. She retired from teaching in 1970, after a 48-year career. Jennie was known and loved by generations of children as their "Aunt Jennie".

In 1928, she married Lyle Simpson of Des Moines. After her retirement from teaching, she married Barrie Christenson in Omaha, and they lived in Harlan, until 1974. After Barrie's death she moved to Jewell, to be close to her nephew, John and his family. In 1984, Jennie renewed a friendship with a high school classmate, Moe Robinson, and moved to Altamonte Springs, FL. Moe and Jennie spent time traveling and visiting family and friends until the time of Moe's death. The last few years she has resided in Benbrook, TX, near her niece, Carol and her family, while spending her summers with John and his family in Jewell. She died at age 95, Oct. 24, 1999, at Mary Greeley Medical Center in Ames, of heart failure.

She is preceded in death by her husbands, Lyle Simpson and Barrie Christenson, and friend, Moe Robinson; her parents, Clement and Elizabeth; her brother and sister-in-law, Dr. John Conaway and Marjorie Gill Conaway; her sister, Helen Conaway, and her nephew, Robert Fisher.

Graveside services were Oct. 28, 1999, at the Masonic Cemetery in Des Moines, with Pastor Gerald F. Sawyer officiating. Becker Funeral Home in Jewell, in charge of arrangements.