

TUESDAY, May 16, 2000



Rescue personnel and law enforcement helped out at the scene of a major accident north of Harlan Thursday morning. They are shown taking driver Dixie Larson to an awaiting ambulance. Larson was in critical but stable condition Friday at St. Joseph's Hospital in Omaha. (Photo by Bob Bjoin)

Accident claims life of Harlan woman

HARLAN -- A 78-year-old Harlan woman was killed in a two-vehicle accident north of Harlan Thursday, May 11.

Ethel A. Gearhart was pronounced dead at Myrtue Memorial Hospital following the accident, which occurred two miles north of Harlan on U.S. Highway 59.

Two other people were injured in the accident. Dixie K. Larson, 73, Harlan, was taken to Myrtue Memorial Hospital by Medivac Ambulance/Rescue with major upper and lower torso injuries. She

was later taken by Life Flight helicopter to St. Joseph's Hospital in Omaha.

June M. Finke, 45, Omaha, was taken to Myrtue Memorial Hospital by Harlan Police. She sustained minor head and hand injuries.

According to Shelby County Sheriff's reports, Larson was driving her 1998 Chevy Malibu southbound on Highway 59. Gearhart was a passenger in the Larson vehicle.

Reports said the Larson vehicle attempted to pass a vehicle but was unable to. The Larson vehicle at-

tempted to pull back in behind the vehicle it was attempting to pass, reports said, and traveled onto the shoulder of the road.

The vehicle then veered out of control back onto the roadway, crossing the center line and into the

path of a 1997 Plymouth Voyager driven by Finke. The two vehicles then collided.

The accident occurred about 10:43 a.m. Thursday morning. Responding to the scene were the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Harlan Police Department, Medivac Ambulance/Rescue, Westphalia Fire and Rescue and the Harlan Fire Department.

Larson was later cited for failure to maintain control. Damages on the two vehicles were unestimated.

Services

Services for Ethel Gearhart, Harlan, were held Monday, May 15 at 11 a.m. at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Harlan.

She is survived by her husband, W.L. "Pat" Gearhart of Harlan; nine daughters -- Patsy (Douglas) Clay of Pasadena, Calif., Metta (Jim) Korte of St. Louis, Mo., Delene (John) Holt of W. Palm Beach, Fla., Mary (Dennis) Hilger of Creston, Susie (David) Knudsen of Kenai, Ak., Sally Gearhart of Oakland, Calif., Margaret (John) Kalal of Modesto, Calif., Kathleen

(Larry) Rizzo of Kansas City, Mo. and Lois (Tom) McElderry of Council Bluffs; and two sons -- Harry (Sandy) Gearhart of Stillwater, Okla. and Weldon Jr. (Kristi) Gearhart of Trenton, Mo.