

Caryl West, 71

June 3, 1936 - Feb. 3, 2008

HARLAN — Caryl J. West was born on June 3, 1936, one of six children born to Frank and Mabel (Berg) Heilesen of Harlan, IA. She grew up on the family farm and attended country school until the eighth grade when the family moved into Harlan. She graduated from Harlan High School with the Class of 1954 and was very active in the music department. After graduation, she worked at several businesses in Harlan, including the Harlan Chamber of Commerce and the Shelby County Bank.



On March 12, 1955, Caryl was united in marriage to Gene West of Harlan. Four children were born to this union: Jennifer, Janice, James, and Julie. They loved to travel and visit their children. They visited all fifty states, including a drive from coast to coast. Before Gene's death in 2005, she accompanied him to many Corvette restoration events, athletic events, and participated in outdoor activities like snow skiing, gardening, and fishing. Caryl belonged to the Literary Club and loved to play bridge with her friends. For her own enjoyment Caryl kept journals, wrote stories and poems. Caryl was a member of the Rainbow for Girls, the Bethel Baptist Church and the United Methodist Church, in Harlan. She was an active member of the United Methodist Women's Circle and participated in many church activities. For many years, Caryl volunteered at the Elm Crest Retirement Home serving as president and as organizer for the soup and pie supper. Caryl was known for her selflessness and she lived her life caring about other people as evidenced by her involvement with numerous volunteer activities in the community. She will be remembered as a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, neighbor, and friend. Caryl died on Sunday, February 3, 2008, at Myrtue Medical Center in Harlan, having attained the age of seventy-one years and eight months.

Caryl was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Gene, her daughter Julie, her brothers Richard and Donald Heilesen, and her sister Bette Sorenson. She is survived by her children: Jennifer and her husband Peter Dyer of Hoffman Estates, IL, Janice and her husband Bob Powers of Poquoson, VA, and James West and his wife Deb of Omaha, NE; six grandchildren: Matt, Ben, Allison, Lauren, Jacob, and Hunter; her brother Frank Heilesen of Santa Rosa, CA; her sister Evelyn Plumb of Leawood, KS; nieces and nephews; other family members and many friends.

A funeral service for Caryl was held on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, with Pastor Walter Bowen and Pastor Donna Ewert officiating the 11:00 AM service. Casket bearers were Bruce Heilesen, Rodney Nordby, Tim Jacobsen, Cy Monson, Mark Jacobs, and John Nordby with interment at the Harlan Cemetery.

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