

Dorothy Kerkvliet

Obituary

GILROY, Calif. - Great Falls native Dorothy "Dot" (Grasseschi) Kerkvliet, 86, died of natural causes Sunday, May 1, in a Gilroy, Calif., care facility.

Cremation has taken place under the direction Grunnagle-Ament-Nelson Funeral Home in Hollister, Calif. Funeral Mass was conducted Friday in Tres Pinos, Calif.

Dorothy was born Dorothy Mae Grasseschi on May 7, 1924, in Great Falls, Mont.

She is survived by her children, Ben, Joe and Dale; son-in-law, Rich Kaiser; eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, John B. Kerkvliet; and daughter Becky Kaiser.

Dorothy was born to Rhoda and Amerigo (Spagg) Grasseschi and was raised in Black Eagle and Great Falls, Mont. She graduated from Great Falls High School in 1943. As with much of Dorothy's generation, her life changed with the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941. Her fiancé, John Kerkvliet, enlisted in the U.S. Navy in August 1942 and the two were married in San Diego, Calif., in December 1942. By the end of the war, Dorothy and John had one son and were expecting their second.

Dorothy and John lived in Great Falls until 1964, and then began following John's career, taking them to Helena and Billings, Mont.; Santa Rosa, Calif.; and Dayton, Ohio. Wanting to return to the West, Dorothy and John transferred to Reno, Nev., where they lived until moving to Hollister, Calif., in 1997. In each location, Dorothy found work in diverse positions, including the Great Falls Iron Works in Great Falls, U.S. Soil Conservation Service in Reno, and Centerville High School in Ohio.

Dorothy was a devoted wife and mother. She loved her family, cats, flowers and square dancing. She was active in the Sweet Adelines, Parent Teachers Associations, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts. She was an active member in whatever neighborhood she lived. She organized community activities, exchanged gifts and shared garden produce as well as her other many skills.

She and John introduced their children to the wonders of nature through camping in Montana and idyllic times fishing, hiking, swimming and working at the family cabin on the Missouri River south of Great Falls.

In her retirement years, Dorothy enjoyed oil painting, making doll clothes and flower gardening. John and Dorothy continued to enjoy hiking, camping, skiing and other adventures, first in the desert and mountains surrounding Reno and then in the Pinnacles and other areas near Hollister. In both locations, they were active in square dancing.

During the 11 years she lived in Hollister, she and John attended weekly Mass at the Immaculate Conception Parish in Tres Pinos. They frequently volunteered their time to help at the Parish, at the Hollister Library, Community Pantry and the annual Montana Picnic.

Dorothy's children will always remember their mother for her honesty, modesty, trustworthiness and devotion to her husband and family. Her presence will be sorely missed, but we know she is always beside us through the values she instilled in those she touched, the wonderful childhoods she gave us, and the 65 years of devotion to John.

Condolences may be posted online at www.gftribune.com/obituaries.

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