

Obituary

Nelda Iris Herron, 86

Nelda Iris Herron, 86 of Blackfoot, Idaho, passed away Tuesday, April 13, 2010 at the home of her daughter.

Nelda Iris Spackman was born November 24, 1923 in Preston, Idaho to Joseph Hyrum Spackman and Iris Julia Jensen Spackman. She grew up on a farm during the Great Depression and learned to work hard. She loved riding horses. She graduated from Preston High School and then worked at J.C. Penney.

She met and married Kenneth Turner Thomas on September 11, 1942 in the Logan LDS Temple. Shortly after that, Kenneth was sent overseas to fight the Japanese in the Pacific. During the war, Nelda lived in Preston with her parents and gave birth to her first son, Kenneth Gayle Thomas.

When Kenneth arrived home they moved to Grace, Idaho where they bought a small dry farm. Once again she worked very hard alongside her husband driving combines, caterpillars, tractors, trucks, feeding motherless baby pigs, etc. They also formed a band and Nelda learned to play the drums. They played for dances all around the area.

Four more children were born to them: Robert Lee, Lorraine, William G (Billy), and Brent Joseph. Nelda also worked for a time at Enders Café in Soda Springs as a short order cook and was reported to be the best cook around.

Nelda loved to sing and she had a beautiful soprano voice. She was in several school and church productions when she was younger and was usually the lead singer. For many years she sang the National Anthem on Memorial Day in Grace. She was a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and the American Red Cross.

After Kenneth's death in 1961, Nelda moved her children into Grace and went to work for Kenneth's best friend, Dr. Emmett Herron, as a medical assistant. Dr. Herron trained her to do everything from injections to insurance and accounting. They were later married. This was at a time before EMTs and first responders were common and Emmett and Nelda were the ones who were called when there was an accident, injury, or death. If they were on call, they would often spend nights responding to emergencies and their days working in the office.

Nelda was an avid gardener and always grew a big vegetable garden—digging the dirt with a shovel, raking out the clods, planting the seeds, hoeing the weeds and canning or preparing the produce. She did this with very little help.

Nelda took care of her husband, Emmett, in their home as he died of liver cancer in 1983. She was his nurse and caretaker for six months after his diagnosis until he passed away.

Nelda moved to Blackfoot in 1985 to live near her daughter and son-in-law. She also began spending a lot of her winters in Sierra Vista, Arizona with her son, Ken. She spent a lot of her time there caring for grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Nelda loved her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren more than anything in this life. She sacrificed her all to see that her children and grandchildren had the best possible life. She loved to crochet and made an afghan for each of her grandchildren.

Nelda was preceded in death by her parents; husbands, Kenneth and Emmett; sons, Robert and Billy; grandson, Kenny; brothers, Ted, Ross, LeRoy and Glenn; and sister, Leila.

Nelda is survived by two sons, Kenneth Gayle Thomas (Jan) of Sierra Vista, Arizona and Brent Joseph Thomas (Annette) of Grace, Idaho; one daughter, Lorraine (Kevin) Merrell of Blackfoot, Idaho; 14 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; and two brothers, Reed (Virginia) Spackman of Preston, Idaho and Stuart (Alice) Spackman of Burley, Idaho.

She was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and had served in the Primary, Relief Society, and was the Ward Chorister for many years. She started serving as a MIA director at the age of 12. She taught herself to site read and was able to sing Soprano, 2nd soprano, or Alto.

She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Funeral arrangements will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 17, 2010 at the Wapello LDS Chapel, 337 N. 200 E. in Blackfoot, with Bishop Charles Dansie, conducting. Family will meet with friends and relatives from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Friday, April 16, 2010 at Hawker Funeral Home, 132 South Shilling Avenue in Blackfoot, and for one hour prior to services at the church. There will be a graveside service held in Grace at the Grace Cemetery on Saturday, April 17, 2010 at 3 p.m.

