

## Obituary

### Moran “Mori” Leon Hiatt, 88

Moran “Mori” Leon Hiatt was born on June 30, 1922 to Marrion Lillian Hales and Wilford Zachary Hiatt. Being the next to youngest he had five brothers and two sisters to contend with as he grew up in the Blackfoot area. His family had a small farm just south of Blackfoot.

Mori graduated from Blackfoot High School and went on to attend college at Idaho State University where he was majoring in music hoping to have his own “big band” someday. When the big band era faded

away so did Mori’s passion for a college education. He joined the U S Army serving in WWII and was honorably discharged. His family was quite musical, so he and some of his siblings with the help of some friends they formed a band called The Melodeons. They played together for many years.

It was during one of their engagements that he met the future Mrs. Mori Hiatt, Etha Eversole Justesen in 1975. On September 1<sup>st</sup> of that year Mori married Etha and the Melodeons played for the reception. When Mori accepted Etha as his wife he also accepted her six children as his own even though the youngest was 18 at the time. Those children, James (Sonny) F. Justesen (deceased), Kaye Hawkins and Larry Justesen both of Blackfoot, Margo Maxwell of Meridian, Idaho, Jewel McMurtry of Idaho Falls, and Jullie Hoen of Great Falls, Montana all called him Daddy M. Even though both Mori and Etha were long past childbearing age a precious baby girl came into their lives not long after they were married. Mori became a daddy to Sue Ann and raised her as his own. Sue Ann Anderson also resides in Blackfoot.

Mori attended church regularly at Blackfoot First Ward where he played the piano for priesthood services for many years. Bishop Tad Pearson said that Mori “was the most respectful person I have ever met.” In the 1980’s Mori was called to serve as a home teacher in the Bingham Memorial Extended Care Facility. He later became a Counselor to the branch president and finally served as Branch President himself. Since music was such a large part of his life he always made sure he played for the residents. Bishop Max Tanner said that he was “always very devoted and a wonderful influence.”

Throughout his life music played a key roll in Mori’s life. He played in many different bands and loved playing for the Senior Citizen Centers in the southeastern Idaho area, for the Blackfoot Public School District Adult Education program, for nursing homes and extended care facilities throughout the region. He always held center stage at the Eastern Idaho State Fair including the most recent one this past September.

Mori passed away the morning of January 1, 2011 at Bingham Memorial Extended Care Facility. The family will be receiving visitors at the Hawker Funeral Home on Tuesday January 4, 2011 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Funeral services will be held at Blackfoot First LDS Ward on Wednesday January 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm with graveside services following at Grove City Cemetery.

Mori was such a gentle soul. He will be missed by everyone who knew him.

