

# Obituary

## Ruby May Smith McElyea, 85



Ruby May Smith McElyea died peacefully at home surrounded by loving family on Friday, July 16, 2010.

She was born to Neil Gordon and Birtie Louvenia Smith on October 13, 1924 in Floydada, Texas, the third of four girls and one son. She was raised on ranches in Elida, New Mexico and Paris, Texas. In the spring of 1940, she met the love of her life, J.T. (Jake) McElyea in Paris, Texas. On December 20, 1940, Ruby and Jake were joined in marriage in Bisbee, Arizona where Jake had gone to work. To this union were born two sons and four daughters.

Due to Jake's work and wanderlust, the family moved often, living in several states and in Peru from July 1957 thru July 1958. Ruby and Jake were divorced on January 4, 1972, but continued to care for each other throughout their lives.

Ruby worked as a waitress until age 55, at which time she became a CNA, working as a home health aide, not retiring from this profession until age 70.

Ruby was a kind, generous person who often took in other people's children, taking care of them like her own until their parents could "get back on their feet."

She was a great cook and baker and loved to feed large crowds. In later years, after retirement, she greatly enjoyed going on the horseshoe pitching tournament circuit where her culinary skills were enjoyed by all.

Ruby was very adventurous and enjoyed the outdoors. She was an avid hunter, going into hunting camp and bagging her last elk at age 81. She went up for a ride in a hot air balloon in 2001, and went white water rafting in the Snake River in 2002. She was also an avid reader and a prolific embroiderer, doing over 3,000 pieces in her lifetime, winning many awards at county and state fairs.

She is survived by one son, Joe (Terry) McElyea of Salem, Oregon; four daughters, Barbara Wheeler and Amaryllis Smith both of Kingman, Arizona, Cathy (Dennis) Hansen and Zenneta Richardson of Firth, Idaho; fourteen grandchildren, 44 great grandchildren, ten great great grandchildren and a very special and much loved friend, Ken Raymond of Rawlins, Wyoming.

She was preceded in death by her infant son, Jackie Travis; husband, J.T. McElyea; parents, Neil and Birtie Smith, one brother, three sisters and one great grandson, Spencer Michael Hansen.

Ruby will be inurned next to her infant son, Jackie Travis in the family's private cemetery. Services are under the direction of Hawker Funeral Home.

Rest in peace our beloved mother and granny.

Condolences may be sent to [condolences@hawkerfuneralhome.com](mailto:condolences@hawkerfuneralhome.com).