

Marcia Berndt, 84

Nov. 12, 1931 - Nov. 7, 2016



HARLINGEN, TX — Marcia Ann Smith Berndt was born on November 12, 1931 in Pelican Rapids, MN to George and Emma Smith. She grew up on a farm near Dent, MN with older sister Dorothy where they enjoyed fishing at Elbow Lake next to the farm. Marcia and her sister went to Pelican Rapids High School where they had to stay with friends and family during the school week as there were no busses to transport them back and forth from home. She graduated high school early at the age of 16 and then attended teacher's training in Fergus Falls, MN after which she taught in a one room school briefly until she went back to school at Moorehead State Teachers College to broaden her teaching opportunities.

While teaching at Albert Lea, MN, Marcia met Dean Berndt on a blind date. Although she enjoyed Dean's company she admitted that she was quite taken with his blue car which may have been the reason their romance blossomed. The two were married on July 7, 1956 and made their home in Brownton, MN where Dean farmed and Marcia taught school. They soon started their family and were very blessed to have seven children. First the five boys followed at last by two daughters. Her strength and will were tested in 1971 when Dean was trapped in a grain elevator explosion in Swea City. She spent many weeks at his bedside as he recovered while friends and family helped with the kids at home. While Dean struggled to find work after the accident, the family moved to Harlan where both he and Marcia began working for a family friend at the livestock auction company. Marcia was still drawn to working with children so she began home daycare for a time and then returned to teaching at the local preschool. In 1980, they moved to Clarinda with the three youngest children where she managed the Pester Derby gas station for a number of years until she opened her home daycare again. She enjoyed the daycare for several years until the couple retired to the Harlingen, TX area where they spent the remainder of their years. Dean passed away Jan. 12, 2009.

Marcia was re-married to Bill Kennedy and they enjoyed their short time together traveling around the US visiting with friends and family. Bill passed away Sept. 16, 2015.

In the spring of 2016, Marcia returned to the midwest as she had done every summer to attend graduations, baby showers, bridal showers, and to visit with her large family. During her five month visit many memories were made as she made her way visiting each of the children and many of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. This was a special time for Marcia as it was for the entire Berndt family. After returning to Texas, Marcia passed away unexpectedly on November 7, 2016.

Marcia was preceded in death by her parents, husband Dean Berndt, and second husband Bill Kennedy, brothers-in-law, Harold Woods and Bernie Berndt. She is survived by sister Dorothy Woods of Dent, MN; sisters in law Norlean Berndt, of Easton, MN and Betty Berndt of Easton, MN; sons Joel Berndt (Karla) of Harlan; Bob Berndt (Janine) of Avoca; Jeff Berndt (Julie) of Mankato, MN; Brad Berndt (Marife) of Brandon, SD; Jon Berndt (Elise) of Clarinda; daughters Barb Ripley (Philip) of Clarinda and Beth Barr (Ryan) of Flower Mound, TX; 23 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Celebration of Marcia's life will be held at The First Baptist Church in Harlan on December 10 at 11:00 a.m. meal and fellowship to follow.

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FUNERAL HOME
1401 Garfield Ave., Harlan
Shelby
755-3177 • 877-755-3177
www.burmeisterjohannsen.com