

Pearl Norgaard, 84
Oct. 16, 1928 - Oct. 7, 2013

HARLAN — A beloved wife, mother, grandmother and friend, Pearle Norgaard joined the world October 16, 1928, born in Panama, to two hardworking parents, John and Mae Behrendt. The fourth born of six, and only one of two girls, she took on the role of caregiver early on, watching over her two younger siblings and helping to keep the elder in line. She was especially fond of her younger sister, Doris Ann. One of Pearle's many responsibilities as a young girl growing up in the midst of the Great Depression was tending to the house and helping her mother in the kitchen. There she first learned the craft she came to master — baking. Her specialty: pie. Like baking, Pearle excelled in most things she did in life, including her role as student. She first went to country school and transitioned over to the Harlan Community School system by the time she was in middle school.



There, she earned her high school diploma at age 17. The schools needed teachers, and she needed a job, so began her first career — teaching. She taught at country schools for a few years while attending college in Omaha to earn her teaching degree.

Somewhere in all of this, she made it to the picture show one fateful night, where she met her lifelong partner, Donald M. Norgaard. For him, it was love at first sight. He asked her out, and history was made. As the old adage goes, first comes love, then comes marriage. Pearle Mae Behrendt and Donald Madsen Norgaard were joined in union the first of June 1949, at Bethel Baptist Parsonage in Harlan. The baby in a carriage came just shy of one year later, welcoming the first of three boys, Dennis John. The family continued to grow, with son Donald Eugene joining in (1952), and the youngest of the three, James Jay born in (1956). Life was full for Pearle and Donald, raising three boys as a united family of one. She cherished every minute spent with her boys, providing them with loving tenderness, and stern discipline all the while. As her boys grew older, Pearle transitioned out of her role as housewife and went on to work for Harlan retailer Spurgeon's, where she would spend the next 20 plus years.

By the mid-1980s, Pearle had four young grandchildren — two boys and two girls — to dote over, and dote she did. She wrapped her arms around those grandchildren and never let go. She was the best grandmother anyone could have asked for. In the early-to-mid 1990s, Pearle also took on the job of babysitting for a very special little girl, Dru Beach. The Beach family continued to grow, and Dru soon had two other siblings, Will and Jack. Pearle would come to know all of them as her own. She was like that. She just had so much love to give. Pearle had a special place in this life, living it out to the fullest, and her memory will forever shine bright for those lucky enough to have known her. Monday, October 7, 2013, she flew back home when her job here was completed, having attained the age of eighty-four years, eleven months, and twenty-one days.

Pearl was preceded in death by her parents, two brothers (Russell and John Behrendt) and one son, James Jay. She is survived by her husband, Donald M. Norgaard of Harlan; two sons: Denny Norgaard and his wife Kathy and Don Norgaard (Barb Doolittle) all of Harlan; four grandchildren: Nancy and her husband Ro Gilbert of New York City, NY, Susie Norgaard of Seattle, WA, Aaron Dailey and his wife Rachel of Omaha, NE, and Donnie Norgaard also of Omaha, NE; three great-grandchildren; her brothers Charles Behrendt and his wife Mildred of Harlan, Clifford Behrendt and his wife Paula also of Harlan, and her sister Doris and her husband Don Jackson of Omaha, NE; other family members and many friends.

Jones

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Baldwin at 9th, Harlan, IA
Also in Avoca & Walnut

Pastor Joe Earle officiated the 10:00 a.m. funeral service on Thursday, October 10, 2013 at Grace Baptist Church in Harlan. Music was provided by accompanist Linda Post and vocalist Sten Christensen. Serving as casket bearers were Glenn French, Stanley Christensen, Roderick Gilbert, Ron Beach, Shaun Bates, and Will Beach. Interment was held at the Harlan Cemetery.

Pauley