

## Bette Jean Sorenson, 77

*July 23, 1924 - April 17, 2002*

**HARLAN** – Bette Jean Sorenson was born to Mabel Viola (Berg) and Frank R. Heilesen, July 23, 1924, in Irwin. She was baptized at the Bethel Baptist Church in Harlan. A member of the Harlan High School Graduating Class of 1941, she continued her education at the American Institute of Business in Des Moines.

Oct. 28, 1945, she married Norman Sorenson at the Gospel Tabernacle in Omaha, NE. Three children were born to this union. Her first priority was as a homemaker. Later, she was employed at the Juhler Veterinarian Clinic. With the purchase of an apartment house in 1948, she focused on its management until 1969. Her interest in china painting and ceramics led to the creation of "Bette's China and Porcelain Dolls" which she continued to operate until her death. Bette Jean served as president of the Iowa World Organization of China Painters and Iowa Society of Painters and Teachers. She was a member of the Iowa Doll Makers Association and International Painters and Teachers. In addition to her many business interests, she was a member of the United Methodist Church in Harlan where she actively participated in her church circle and was a lifetime member of the United Methodist Builder's Club. She was a member of the Zenobia Rebekah Lodge No. 286 of Harlan. She died April 17, 2002, at Myrtue Memorial Hospital at age 77 years, eight months and 25 days.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Norman Sorenson; her daughter, Linda Kochel; and two brothers, Richard and Donald Heilesen. She is survived by her children, Mary (Dwain) Nordby of Irwin and Carl Sorenson (Cindy) of Apopka, FL; eight grandchildren; four great grandchildren; one brother, Frank Heilesen of Santa Rosa, CA; two sisters, Evelyn Plumb of Harlan and Caryl (Lugene) West of Harlan; nieces and nephews and other relatives.

Funeral services were held April 20, 2002, at Pauley Funeral Home with Rev. Paul Wilcox officiating. Burial was in the Harlan Cemetery with Karol Osbahr, Rachelle Sorenson, Jon Nordby, Rodney Nordby, Megan Sorenson, Kelly Monson, Wendell Nordby and Dustin Nordby honorary casket bearers. Casket bearers were James West, Frank Heilesen III, Tim Jacobsen, Jim Heilesen, Bruce Heilesen, Lon Sorenson, Jeff Jacobsen and Tom Heilesen.

