



Erma C. Wheeler

October 9, 1921 - September 12, 2019

Born in Spokane, WA, Erma was the fifth of ten children of Louella McLaughlin Patchen and Robert Patchen.

She married Raymond J. Wheeler in September of 1939 in Fort Yates, North Dakota. As a rancher's wife, she raised a family and cooked for hired hands without electricity, and water came from the well in the yard. Power came to the ranch in the mid-50's allowing for indoor running water and electric lights. She kept the wood range because that was how she learned to cook. During those hard cold Dakota winters with a coal furnace for heat and her cook stove, many times she would have newborn calves brought in to warm up by the oven or on the furnace grate. In the hot summers with no central air, she would fix meals for up to 12 hired men plus her family. During haying season she would haul lunch in the old station wagon, never complaining. Everyone was welcome at her table and there was always room for another, even at the last minute. It may have been one of her kids friends from school, a neighbor or some extended family member traveling through the area. Everyone enjoyed Erma's cooking and especially homemade cinnamon rolls often served with homemade butter.

Erma loved horses but was scared of them, she always encouraged those of us that wanted to be with the horses to do it. Raising five rambunctious children was a full time job in itself. The three older boys were always into

something and of course getting hurt. No matter how bad it was, she always had them clean up and put clean underwear on before going to the Doctor. She loved her children and always went the extra mile for them and they always knew they could talk to Mom.

Erma was always proud of her Sioux Indian heritage and she was an avid fan of genealogy.

She enjoyed sharing old photos and stories of ancestors with extended family and friends. She was also an accomplished artist, selling a number of her works and teaching painting classes.

Erma was very proud of receiving her nursing assistant certification, always putting in the extra effort. She was great at interacting with people, when she walked into a room, people would stop whatever they were doing to watch her. She always had a smile and a pat on the shoulder for everyone she saw.

Erma's husband Ray preceded her in death in 2003. She was the last surviving sibling of her family; her brother Robert Patchen and sister Josephine Tenbrook passed earlier this year.

She is survived by her five children: Raymond C. "Bucky" (Karen), Darcy R. "Corky", Larry (Carole), Leslie (Bob Crebo) and Wanda (Gene Dawes). Erma is also survived by nine grandchildren, eighteen great-grandchildren and six great-great-grandchildren.

A private service was held for her at St. Mary of Guadalupe church in Ridgefield.