



Marilyn Mae Whitman

May 10, 1926 - April 27, 2017

MARILYN M. WHITMAN May 10, 1926 ~ April 27, 2017 Marilyn M. Whitman of Vancouver, WA, passed away on April 27, 2017 at the age of 90. She was born May 10, 1926 near St. John, WA on a wheat farm in the Palouse. She didn't make a sound at first and was tucked in behind the wood stove until they heard that first cry. She was the second child of Dick and Louise Squires and joined her brother and later two sisters. Music was the heart of the family. By the age of three, Marilyn was singing "Strawberry Roan" on the dining room table to entertain visitors. These were the hard times of the Great Depression but their family was sustained by the joy generated by playing music together. The neighbors also appreciated the sounds coming from their porch on a summer night. Marilyn graduated from Rosalia High School in 1943. At age of 14, in a game of Winkum at a church social, she caught the eye of a neighbor boy, Phil Whitman, who would become the love of her life. They were married in 1945 when he managed to get a leave from the army. After the war, Marilyn and Phil lived in Rosalia where their daughter, Phyllis, was born. She was joined four years later by her brother, Hal. They moved to St. John for five years before moving to Ritzville, WA. She began working at the Columbia Gas Company which led to her work at DSHS determining financial eligibility for clients. This was the beginning of a productive career. While in Ritzville, they formed a deeply satisfying relationship with the Menno Mennonite church and formed many lifelong friendships. She also had the joy of directing their very talented choir. In 1972, they moved to Vancouver, WA

and a whole new world opened up to them. Marilyn's work at DSHS led to increased responsibilities and challenges and resulted in her becoming a Financial Supervisor. Her understanding of her own capabilities grew exponentially during this time and she was well known for her ability to calmly handle volatile clients and workers. The 35 years on 104th led to many amazing vegetable gardens and wonderful neighbors and friends. It also led to her life as a grandma. She enjoyed engaging her granddaughter, Cydney in baking cookies and reading books and her sewing talents were put to good use making darling dresses. In her retirement, Marilyn was active in the Columbia Presbyterian Church. Their Neighbors in Deed program gave her and Phil many meaningful opportunities to help others. Their commitment to helping each other reach their highest potential led to a lifelong love affair of 64 years. Near the end of his life, Phil was often heard to say, "It's been a good one, hasn't it, Mom?". Marilyn is survived by her daughter, Phyllis and son-in-law, Jack Heims of Portland; son, Hal of Tekoa; and granddaughter, Cydney Heims M.D. of Portland. She was preceded in death by her husband, Philip Whitman; brother, Dick Squires; and sisters, Dorothy Halloway and Shirley St. John. Services will be held at 10 a.m., Friday, May 19th, 2017 at Evergreen Memorial Gardens, 1101 NE 112th Ave., Vancouver, WA. Remembrances may be given to Mennonite Disaster Service, 1378 N. Damon Rd., Ritzville, WA 99169 or Columbia Presbyterian Church, 805 SE Columbia Ridge Drive, Vancouver, WA 98664. Please sign her guest book at: www.columbian.com/obits.

Tribute Wall



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Evergreen Memorial Gardens - July 03, 2025 at 09:13 PM



“ *I will miss Marilyn, she was a long time friend. She was a really good person and will be missed by many. Her smile could make you feel better and we had many laughs together.*

Trudy McKinney - May 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *I sure will miss you, dear friend. Your kindness, and love will continue to comfort me in your absence. I expect your beautiful voice has been restored in the presence of Jesus as you rejoice to be home with the Lord and with your family in Heaven. Loving you always.*

Denise Cole - May 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM