



## Matilda Inga Empting-Hover

March 1, 1932 - April 29, 2020

It is with heavy hearts that we note the April 29, 2020 passing of Matilda "Tillie" Inga Empting Hover at the age of 88. She was an extraordinary person...a fabulous mother, unique sister, steadfast wife, special aunt, loving grandmother, great-grandmother and friend to all.

She was born to Benjamin Franklin "Frank" Baird and Inga Woldstad Baird on March 1, 1932 on a prairie farm in Crookston, Minnesota. It was a land both beautiful and unforgiving. She was the 7th of the nine children: Ida June Simpson (dec.), Jean Elizabeth Olson (dec.), Helen Janice Foster Mc Bride (dec.), Evelyn Mary Epema (dec.), Charles Wesley Baird (dec.), Ruth Katherine Harker, Bernice Irene McCollough Kline and Mary Louise Hegg Dostal. They all grew up self-sufficient, persistent and hardworking.

Tillie was the towheaded tomboy of the family and was often found outside working with her father. Whether on her own time or with sibling accomplices, she would take dares to climb the silos, ride both horses and cows, and play basketball. They were locally known as "The Baird Girls and Charles". Many pictures of them have survived and many stories still abound, but with so many sisterly viewpoints such that a naive listener could not recognize they were of the same event.

Their industrious family unit capably carried them through the Great

Depression, World War II, The Korean War and into the hopping 1950s.

In Tillie's own words her main interest in life was "to have a family". Soon after marrying James "Jim" Empting, she gave birth to their first beloved child, Jerry James Empting, who died in infancy in 1951. She was not deterred and went on to have 3 more children: Larry (her bookworm), Steve (her drummer and craftsman) and finally her daughter Susan (her stylish young woman and talented multitasker).

It was as a mother that she shined: kind, firm, caring, empathetic and a natural at knowing what to do and say in any parenting situation. She could lovingly comfort, but at the same time do farm girl "cut to the chase" comments like "I can tell when you're lying by just looking at your eyes so tell me what really happened". She relentlessly and supportively pushed her children to their own self-sufficiency and independence, but with compassion.

She was a good soul; she liked and cared about everyone and she was universally loved by all she met, including strangers. She had a sixth sense for other's feelings and a kind acceptance of the uniquenesses and differences in people. We are all better people for having known her.

Once her children were grown and on their own she moved out of the Minnesota snow to Vancouver, Washington and for the first time in her single/divorced life she found her niche. In 1988 she married Lawrence "Larry" Hover and they were both loving of the other, fun, independent and their little dog Maggie served as their furry prodigy. After a happy 24 years of marriage, her beloved Larry passed in 2012.

Baird family Reunions started taking place in 1980 and every 5 years thereafter. These have been a highlight for Tillie to have a chance to schmooze with her siblings, 30-odd nieces and nephews, the 7 grandchildren

and her 8 great-grandchildren. She loved dispensing advice, giving support, sharing a libation and even shooting the whitewater rapids with the many adventurers in the family. Having her family was her world and she truly treated the world as her family.

Some people just have that "something special" and Tillie had it in spades and we will all keep a bit of her in our heads and hearts as we go through life.

As Baird descendants and Tillie's family and friends we wish her a fond farewell...we meet again.

A Celebration of Life memorial will be joyously held at a later date.

Final arrangements are being handled by Evergreen Memorial Gardens.