

Remembrance

Donna C. Kersten Sorensen, 92

Oct. 13, 1926 - July 19, 2019

HARLAN – Donna C. Kersten Sorensen was born on October 13, 1926 to William A. Lockling and Laura Bell (Piercy) Lockling at Sandy Point on the Missouri River. She graduated from Modale High School in 1944 under the Normal Training Course curriculum and received her teaching certificate from Iowa State Teacher's College. Years later in 1980, she went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Buena Vista College, the same year as her fifth child.



Donna started her teaching career in a one-room school house in Persia at the age of 18 and later moved to teach in Mondamin, where she was also a sponsor for the girls' basketball team. It was on a basketball trip that she met her husband, Lauren E. Kersten.

She was united in marriage with Lauren on January 16, 1949, at the First Christian Church in Council Bluffs, and to this union seven children were born: Larry, Bob, Jerry, Deb, Julia, Nancy, and Laura. To these seven children were born 21 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren. Lauren passed away in August, 1981.

Donna was a life-long learner and teacher. In her learning and her teaching, she made lifelong friends. She started teaching in a one-room school house, and continued with generations of school children, decades of Sunday School children, as well as her own children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, foster children and foreign exchange students.

Music played a large part in her life from an early age. She began to chord on the piano while her dad and brothers played the fiddle. Those family music sessions continued into the next generation as she taught her children and her students to harmonize their voices and their lives. She was always happy to sit down at her piano with her children gathered around, singing out of well-loved Hymnals. Donna at the piano was often the center of family gatherings.

After losing her first husband, Donna married R. Leroy Sorensen of Harlan in 1994. They enjoyed many years of square dancing and traveling together before his death in April, 2017.

Donna served her Lord as an active member of Christ's Church in Harlan and served her community by being a leader of the Prairie Rose 4-H Club, a beloved Dean of the youngest campers at Nebowa Christian Camp, a member of Concerned, Inc., Harlan Chapter of Kiwanis, Shelby County Historical Society, Christ's Church Ladies' Circle, and multiple community choirs. She was a faithful Sunday School teacher and church pianist until she was nearly 90 years old.

Donna passed away on Friday, July 19, 2019, surrounded by her children at the home of her daughter Nancy Kersten Carlson of Morehead.

Donna was preceded in death by her parents, her brother Robert S. Lockling, her first husband Lauren Ellis Kersten, and her second husband Robert Leroy Sorensen.

Donna is survived by four siblings: William D. Lockling of Rio Linda, CA, Ardith Eugene Lockling of Yale, Kenneth L. Lockling of Hastings, NE, and Carolyn F. Lockling Nielson of Des Moines; seven children: Larry L. Kersten (Sandi) of Rio, WV; Robert E. Kersten (Carol) of McKinney, TX; Jerald E. Kersten (Connie) of Castle Rock, CO; Deborah D. Kersten Barber (Jonathan) of Payson, AZ; Julia A. Kersten Roberts (Greg) of Panora; Nancy J. Kersten Carlson (Dave) of Moorhead; Laura L. Kersten Stanton (Steve) of Chehalis, WA; 21 grandchildren: Jeremy Kersten, Kris Kersten, Jonnae Barber Shetter, Lisa Kersten, Amy Barber Roberts, Scott Kersten, Melissa Barber Ellis, Jason Roberts, Kyle Kersten, Nathan Roberts, Andrew Carlson, Kristen Roberts Reinhardt, Kord Kersten, Kaci Kersten Martin, Cassie Carlson Mulder, Kersten Stanton Peterson, Jordan Carlson, Amanda Roberts Cox, Jordan Stanton, Kreg Kersten, Keah Kersten John, and 34 great grandchildren.

Memorial services were held at 5 pm on Friday, July 26, 2019, at the Therildsen Activity Center in Harlan, with Pastors Josh Weece and Robert Kersten officiating. Visitation was held at the Center prior to the service from 4 to 5 pm. A private burial followed the service. All arrangements were under the direction of Pauley Jones Funeral Home, Harlan.

Memorials in Donna's memory may be directed to Concerned, Inc. in Harlan.

Pauley Jones
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION

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