



Margaret M. Smith

June 18, 1920 - December 27, 2018

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A Celebration of Life

Margaret (Merchant) Smith, 98, longtime resident of Wasco, Sherman County, passed away peacefully the evening of December 27, 2018 at Samaritan Pacific Hospital in Newport following a brief illness, with both of her children at her bedside.

Margaret Florence Merchant was born June 18, 1920 on Juniper Butte, near Terrebonne, Oregon to William Vern and Anna Lee (Martin) Merchant in her midwife Grandmother Josaphene (& Isaac) Martin's home. She grew up in Culver, Oregon where her parents operated a grocery and general merchandise store, after moving to town from his nearby Peck family homestead shortly after she was born. Vern purchased the vacant court house building, moved it next to the Old Highway 97, and converted it into their new Red and White Store which stands today, and until recently a gift shop operated in a portion of the building with many of the original fixtures and display cases. Their home was near the store and across the street from the schoolyard which her Mother could see from her kitchen window. Arriving

home one day her Mother asked Margaret why she knocked Robert down during recess. Her reply: "He called me 'Maggie.' You told me I had a perfectly good name and didn't have to be called that, so I shoved him..." And thus began her lifelong aversion to nicknames.

After graduating from Culver High School in a class of five (1938), she attended Behnke-Walker Business College in Portland. She returned home in April 1939 to help at the wedding of an older schoolmate, who was marrying her principal for the first three years of high school. She met the Best Man, Delmer Smith, first cousin to the groom, who offered her a ride back to Portland where he was working for Otis Elevator. She apparently decided he was the "best man" as they were married the next year on June 23, 1940 in her parent's new home in Redmond, Oregon, and enjoyed the next 68 years together, rarely parted.

Otis had released Delmer due to lack of work so, following a "gone fishing" honeymoon, they settled in Wasco next door to his Smith Grandparents home on Fulton Street and Delmer began harvest with his brother Leon on the family homestead farm East of Wasco their Medler grandparents had established in 1898. Come December farm work was slow and Otis needed him temporarily in Spokane for a few weeks. Ten years later they were still there. Two children followed, Marilyn in 1941 and William in 1945. Delmer spent the war years classified "essential services," travelling from the West Coast to Montana and South to Utah, servicing military and hospital elevators with one other mechanic. They enjoyed family camping trips combined with service trips in their little red Studebaker sedan, notably to Yellowstone Park where William knocked his mother into the backseat of said sedan (where she was making his bed) while backing away from a bear crossing their campsite.

When his brother Leon died suddenly in 1950, Delmer & Margaret moved back to Wasco to farm. They moved into the homestead East of Wasco where

Delmer had been born, and then to their new home they built in 1951, a mile "down the creek" off Scott Canyon Road with the view of her mountains that Margaret had requested. Great Nephew Nathan & Samantha Smith are now raising their family to appreciate Margaret's view as well as being the fifth and possibly sixth generations to operate the Smith Farm lands.

Margaret had to learn to be a farmer's wife very quickly, and said she would not have fed the hired men and harvest crews without the help and support of her Mother-in-Law, Leona Smith, and Grandmother-in-Law, Anna Medler Lee. Delmer & Margaret maintained a large vegetable garden every year, and Margaret canned fruit, pickles and beets. She learned knitting, crocheting, sewing and quilting from her own Mother and enjoyed them her entire life. A new lap robe, yarn and crochet hook were in the bag she took to the hospital with her.

She participated in the The Dalles Hospital Auxiliary Volunteer Services for at least 25 years with a sewing circle of local friends and neighbors, making hand puppets for the hospital. They would individually cut and sew parts, mostly from their scrap bags, and then meet to stuff heads and assemble the puppets. Margaret had a machine that could easily sew the plastic face into the head so that became one of her regular tasks. Each child who stayed in the hospital at least overnight received a puppet, as well as being available in the gift shop. She was an instructor/leader for a 4H knitting group after her children were out of school.

Family camping, fishing and coastal vacations were annual events, and in the early 60's they graduated to campers, which Margaret subsequently used to take meals to the field for harvest crews while she sat up in the overhead bed space and hand quilted blocks. They acquired their first motorhome in order to take their Mothers on a trip to the coast and from then on their travelling

carried them further away from the ranch with each advancing year.

Margaret advanced through an amazing progression of handwork hobbies which she used for "road work" while traveling, beginning in the early 60's with hand embroidery under Margilee Kaseberg's tutelage, some beadcrafting, pine needle basketry, and counted cross stitch. She gifted family and friends with beautiful baskets and cross stitch items. In 2001, Marilyn helped her buy her first embroidery machine, and it immediately became a passionate daily activity she enjoyed the rest of her life, decorating clothes, shopping bags and squares for blocks in bed and crib quilts for family and hospitals, as well as monthly squares for her daughter, sister, cousin and herself for display in the cathedral window wall hangings she made for them as well. With the advent of grandchildren in the 60's Margaret had begun making Christmas ornaments each year, utilizing each of these handcrafts, and continued the tradition through 2017 to an ever increasing list of grand- and great- children, nieces, nephews and friends - more than 50 in each of the last years.

Delmer & Margaret enjoyed trips to Montana to visit their daughter & family, and South to Death Valley and Arizona. When William moved to Texas, they immediately became "snowbirders" travelling different routes to Texas and staying for longer periods of time each winter before returning to Wasco and Montana in the summers. In 2001 they downsized, moving from the ranch into William's duplex in Richland Hills, Texas and continued an annual summer trek, joined by William, to Montana, Sherman County, down the Oregon Coast and returning to Texas with Marilyn on board as well most years. Following Delmer's death in 2008, Margaret and William decided to move back to Oregon, and in 2009 found a home in Seal Rock where they could watch the ocean waves, and enjoyed visits from family and friends.

Margaret was preceded in death by her parents, husband, sister Geraldine Bertsch, and grandson Paul Barnett. She is survived by her daughter Marilyn

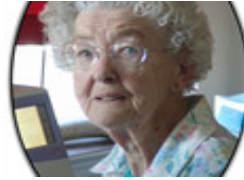
& Keith Barnett, son William Smith, grandson Lee Barnett & Laurie Booth, great-grandchildren Brandan & Abigayle Barnett and Morgan Barnett, two great-great-grandchildren Addyson Mae and Wyatt Benjamin, and many nieces, nephews and their families.

At her request, no services will be held, with a graveside gathering at a later date when she joins Delmer in a family plot in Sunrise Cemetery, Wasco, Oregon. Memorials may be made to the Sherman County Historical Society, or the charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall



“ 6 files added to the album William Smith



Bateman Newport LLC - June 29, 2023 at 11:56 AM

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“ Marilyn & Keith, just wanted to tell you I am sorry for your loss. I met Margaret only once but it was easy to tell she was just one of those ladies from that generation who was so very kind to all she met. Ron often talked about in the "old days" when Keith was chasing you Marilyn and the trips they made to Grass Valley. I am sure the road from the top of Shearers grade to your house became a thrill to Keith, Sid and Ron and probably others. Ron always spoke highly of your Mother. It is hard to realize that we are now the "older generation", I don't know where the years went. My sincere condolences,

Sherry Holliday - January 24, 2019 at 12:00 AM

WI

“ *We love you Mother, RIP* ”



William - January 11, 2019 at 12:00 AM