



Katie Jo Russell

May 11, 2019

Katie Jo Russell passed from this life on May 11, 2019. She was 89 years of age. Family was by her side during her final hours and days.

Katie was the eldest of four children born to Bertie Lee and Jim. The family lived in rural Pittsburg County, Oklahoma with many relatives nearby. Katie had many fond memories of her country childhood.

After graduating from high school, Katie and her family moved to Carlsbad, New Mexico where she met Henry "Russ" Russell. She also started her thirty-six year career as a telephone operator. Katie and Russ were married in 1950 and made their home in Roswell, New Mexico where Russ served in the Air Force. Katie and Russ had two sons, Larry and Ron. The boys were blessed to have such devoted and loving parents. Larry was born with special needs and Katie became an advocate for special needs children. She was instrumental in starting a special needs school program in Roswell. Sacrificing sleep and rest, she often worked nights so she could spend the days caring for her boys.

In 1963, Katie and Russ moved their family to Denver, Colorado to provide better educational opportunities for their sons. Katie continued her advocacy for special needs individuals and was not shy about confronting members of the state legislature.

Compared to their life in the desert of southern New Mexico, Colorado seemed truly lush. Katie and family thoroughly enjoyed camping, hiking, and fishing at every opportunity. Katie also enjoyed crafts including needlepoint, quilting, and making Christmas ornaments. She was a skilled seamstress and traveled with a group of seamstresses to tour related sites in New York City.

In Denver, Katie was employed with AT&T and became a supervisor and trainer of telephone operators. She was proud to have been involved when computer use was implemented for the operators. She retired in 1990 to spend more time with family. She and Larry walked many miles enjoying trails in the Denver area.

After Russ passed away in 2002, Katie and Larry moved to Davis, Oklahoma. They had lots of good times with family and friends there. Many stray cats in Davis found food and kindness at their back door. Katie was very thankful for the time she spent in Davis. She remained able and active into her late eighties and often drove to Colorado to visit family there. As always, Katie devoted herself to being there for Larry and enjoying life with him. Near the end of her life, Katie commented what a good team she and Larry had been and how they took great care of each other.

Larry was diagnosed with a terminal illness in 2017. Katie drove many miles taking him to doctors' appointments and treatments. Katie and Larry moved to Pauls Valley, Oklahoma where Larry passed away August of 2018. Larry's death was a great loss for Katie and she struggled to recover.

Katie moved to Fort Collins, Colorado October of 2018 to be near her son, Ron and his family. She beamed happiness when with her grandchildren and great-grand children.

Katie's health declined quickly after she suffered broken bones from a fall that occurred while she was recovering from a prior hip surgery.

Katie was a loving and devoted mother, wife, and sister. She was strong willed and determined. She accepted the many challenges of her life with no complaints. Katie was a faithful Christian her entire life. She will be greatly missed by those she left behind, but we know she is now at peace and with the loved ones who preceded her.

A family gathering will be held in Fort Collins to honor Katie. Please say a prayer of gratitude for her life, and if you wish to make a contribution in her name, donate to ARC or a program of your choice that is dedicated to special needs individuals.

Tribute Wall



“ *Katie Jo Russell*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Ron Russell - May 18, 2019 at 10:55 AM



“ *13 files added to the album Memories Album*



Ron Russell - May 18, 2019 at 10:01 AM

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“ 14 files added to the album Katie



Ron Russell - May 17, 2019 at 05:53 PM