



Merle McKinney

April 28, 1922 - January 20, 2008

Merle Adeline Conley (Flora) McKinney died of pneumonia at Poudre valley Hospital in Fort Collins on January 20, 2008. She was 85 years old. Merle was born April 28, 1922 in Urbana, North Dakota to Earle F. Conley and Winnifred Graham Conley. As a North Dakota farm girl, she and her family survived the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. She graduated from Valley City High School and received two bachelor's degrees and a teaching degree from Valley City State College. In college, she was president of both her sorority and her junior class, performed for the college radio station programs, painted murals in several of the college buildings and sold some of her paintings to the college. Following graduation, she taught at several rural schools in North Dakota. During her career as a teacher, she taught every grade from kindergarten to twelfth grade. While in college, she met naval student Donald Flora whom she subsequently married. Avid boogie woogie dancers, they traveled around the county seeking out big band performances from Chicago to Seattle. After Don got out of the Navy, they moved to his hometown of Durango, Colorado where Merle taught English, Art, and Home Economics at Durango High School and Smiley Junior High from 1946 to 1951. The marriage ended in divorce in 1950. Merle married Herb McKinney (to whom she remained married for 35 years) in 1951 and retired from teaching to become a full-time mother and homemaker. She stated that motherhood gave her the most fulfillment of anything in her life. She was a room mother, a Brownie and Girl Scout leader, and a Sunday school teacher. She often

babysat for neighbors' children after school. She was known for her fantastic oatmeal cookies, and visited often by the neighborhood children who enjoyed sampling them. After her children were grown, she worked as a seamstress and did volunteer work for spouses and families of alcoholics. She later worked as a librarian at Durango Public Library. Her husband died in 1986, and in 1987 she retired from the library and moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming to be near her daughter and her family. In 1995, she moved again with her daughter and family to Fort Collins, Colorado where she spent her time quilting, sewing, painting, crocheting, going to garage sales, and playing with her grandsons. She was also known for her unique designs of lapel pins, rag dolls, and stuffed animals. The numerous quilts she made are prized family possessions. Merle was known for her kindness, cleverness, love of children, sense of humor, and creative artistry. She was preceded in death by her husband Herbert McKinney, her son Perry McKinney, both parents, two brothers, Wayne Conley and Wesley Conley, and two infant children. She is survived by her son Martin McKinney of Denver, Colorado, her daughter Darby Nabors and son-in-law David Nabors, of Fort Collins, two grandsons Morgan Nabors and Michael Nabors, also of Fort Collins, her granddaughter Mariah McKinney of Loveland, daughter-in-law Mari McKinney of Fort Collins, brother Clayton Conley and sister Margaret York both of Jamestown, North Dakota, and numerous nieces, nephews, sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law. Cremation has taken place. Her ashes will be taken to Durango by her family per her wishes. A celebration of her life was held in the common room of Woodbridge Apartments, 1508, West Elizabeth, Fort Collins, Colorado at 1:00 PM, Saturday, January 26, 2008. In lieu of flowers, well wishers are urged to make donations to Meals on Wheels, c/o Goes Funeral Care, 3665 Canal Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80524

Tribute Wall



“ *Merle McKinney*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM