



Geraldine M. Hehnke

February 11, 1920 - August 8, 2013

Mrs. Geraldine M. Hehnke, age 93, joined her Lord and Savior on July 8, 2013. A Memorial service will be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, where she was an active member, on September 14, 2013 at 10:30 a.m. with reception to follow. Private interment will be at Goleta Cemetery.

Mrs. Hehnke was born in Audobon, Iowa to Rex E. Zink and Emma C. Zink. She had an 8-yr old brother, Austin E. Zink. Soon thereafter, they moved to Stuart, Iowa, where she grew up. She was Salutatorian of her graduating class in 1938 at Stuart High School. She participated in all musical activities and also lettered in girls basketball. She received a scholarship to Grand Island Business College in Grand Island, NE. Her best friend since the first day of kindergarten also received a scholarship to GIBC. They rented a room in the home of Mrs. Louis Veit, grandmother of Carl L. Hehnke, who turned out to be her future husband.

After receiving her diploma, taking Civil Service examinations, and being interviewed in Omaha, NE she was employed as a Stenographer with the FBI in Omaha, and later transferred to the Washington, D.C. Field Office. After 2-1/2 years she resigned to attend the State University of Iowa, in Iowa City working toward a Bachelor of Science in Commerce degree. While there, she was employed part-time as Assistant Secretary to the Director of Iowa Memorial Union and Fine Arts.

After two years, and running out of money, she was recommended by the Dean of the College of Commerce to be interviewed for work with International Business Machines. She was one of fifty-two girls chosen from colleges and universities in the East and Middlewest by IBM to be sent to Systems Service School in Endicott, N.Y., and was one of only two girls who were not college graduates. Upon graduating, she was sent to Chicago, Ill. As a Systems Service woman she worked with a salesman calling on customers and helping with their problems. It was the beginning of electrical accounting. She worked there until World War II came to an end and Carl Hehnke, to whom she was engaged, was on his way home from Tinian Island in the Mariannas Islands in the Pacific Ocean. After seven years of courtship, mostly by correspondence, Carl and Geraldine (Geri) were married on Dec. 3, 1945, in the chapel at Lowry Field, Denver, CO.

From there they went to Grand Island, NE, where Carl worked in the sheet metal trade.

Geri worked for a short time as Principle Stenographer to the Director, U.S. Employment Service and then as Statistical Clerk, U.S. Government, Federal Communications Commission, Monitoring Station. Then they moved to Aurora, NE, where Carl started his own Sheet Metal and Furnace Company. Two of their children, Frances Jean and Douglas Stephen, were born in Aurora. In 1952 they sold their shop and moved to California. Carl joined the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 273 and was employed for 5 years in San Luis Obispo. They moved to Santa Barbara after Carl was elected Business Agent of the Local Union in 1957. They moved to Goleta in 1959. Their third child, Carl Andrew, was born in Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital.

Geri stayed home to care for her family and be involved in their activities. She was happy to watch them grow into adults and succeed in the fields each had chosen. She was an excellent seamstress and fashioned clothes for all the family. She also made hats to go with her outfits. When Carl was Scoutmaster and Carl Andrew (Andy) was in the Scouts she made vests, jackets, mittens, backpack, etc. for their backpacking summer excursions, including a 2-man tent with rain fly. Their first camping vacations started with a tent trailer, then Carl and Andy built a camper for their truck, and they ended up with a 5th wheel trailer.

She brushed up on her skills and went back to work at UCSB in the Chancellor's office in 1966 and retired in 1974 as the Administrative Assistant to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.

Geri is preceded in death by here husband, Carl. She is survived by her three children, five grandchildren and one great granddaughter. She was a loving, strong and amazing woman and is greatly missed.

Cemetery Details

Goleta Cemetery

44 South San Antonio Road
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93110
(805) 967-3608