

EAST OREGONIAN

Bytha H. Mathews

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Mathews

Bytha H. Mathews of College Place, Washington, passed away December 15, 2017, at Providence St. Mary Medical Center in Walla Walla, Wash., at the age of 99 years. Private interment will be in the Olney Cemetery in Pendleton, Ore., followed by a memorial service at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the American Heart Association or Alzheimer's Association in care of the Munselle-Rhodes Funeral Home, 902 S. Main, Milton-Freewater, OR 97862.

Born January 24, 1918, near Hermiston, Ore., Bytha was the third child and the third girl born to Odessa Mary Porter Hoskins and James C. Hoskins. She grew up on her parents' sheep ranch and very much enjoyed summers trailing sheep up Weston Mountain, over Tollgate to the shipping point in Summerville, Ore. Her father was well off for those times until the Great Depression hit. Her dad lost everything due to bad timing, so Bytha graduated high school living in a tent. Her parents were forward thinking and education was an important part of their girls' future.

Bytha attended Oregon State Normal School, majoring in fashion design with a business minor. Lewis Charles Mathews caught Bytha's eye at a Grange dance and they were married March 4, 1938. Seven years later, Bytha gave birth to Mary Ruth Mathews, followed by Kay Mathews and finally Dona Sue Mathews.

She always encouraged her girls to be involved in 4-H, sports, church and youth groups.

In 1957, Charlie and Bytha moved their family to Roseburg, Ore., as Charlie took a job with Kenneth Ford in the logging industry, supporting Kenneth in the development of the future Roseburg Lumber Products Company. Bytha was a housewife throughout the school years of her daughters. She taught Bible studies, Sunday school and enjoyed gardening and cooking. Favorite weekend activities included, Sunday afternoon dinners at Mac's Place up the North Umpqua and visiting Kenneth Ford's ranch near Glide. Animals were always a part of her life and she instilled that love in her girls. Lots of dogs, cats, chickens, guinea pigs, rabbits, parakeets, a litter of baby skunks, horses and bumper lambs found a home at the Mathews' house.

Traveling was a natural part of Bytha's life. Her parents and many friends remained behind in Pilot Rock, Ore., when the family moved to Roseburg. The eight-hour drive to see them occurred frequently throughout the year as family was always a priority for Bytha. Another fun activity for the family was taking Charlie's Willys Jeep and dune buggy to the Oregon Coast and spending the weekend in the sand.

Charlie retired from his position as truck boss for Roseburg Lumber Company after 40 years and took a new job for Kenneth Ford traveling the Pacific Northwest to supervise removal of old mills and transporting the equipment back to Roseburg. Bytha was right there with him and the two of them got to see a lot of country during those trips. They also traveled the United States in their motor home — even tackling Alaska a few times. Bytha followed her daughter Kay to places outside the United States and enjoyed meeting people from other cultures and engaging them in conversations about their families and work.

Following Charlie's death in 1993, Bytha sold the home in Roseburg and moved to Vancouver, Wash., to be near Kay. When keeping up her own place became too much of a chore, Bytha moved to Walla Walla, Wash., to be closer to daughters Ruth and Dona. She stated life had come full circle after moving to Walla Walla, as her life started in Eastern Oregon and would end in the same area.

Bytha is survived by daughters Ruth Snively (Ron) of Pilot Rock, Ore., Dr. Kay Mathews Davis of Vancouver, Wash., and Dona Rahn (Cary) of Walla Walla, Wash.; grandchildren Eric Snively, Marnie Freske, Kevin Snively, Kelly Snively and Darin Bathrick (Brandi); great-grandchildren Haley Freske, Darby Freske, Paige Snively, Lacey Snively, Zachary Snively (Ashley), Jade Snively, Dallas Ellis, Paris Andrew, Otto Snively, Rytta Snively, Charlie Bathrick and Grace Bathrick; three great-great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters and her husband.

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