

Barbara Kononen Hernandez

Posted: Friday, January 25, 2013 2:14 pm

Barbara Kononen Hernandez, 86, died in Eugene, Oregon, on January 5, 2013. Born in Pendleton, Ore., on June 23, 1926, to John Peter Kononen and Maria Wiinimaki Kononen, Barbara was preceded in death by her siblings — Clifford, Ellis, Ruth (“Dolly”) Plant, and Robert. Her husband, Joaquin Hernandez, whom she married in 1968, died in 2003.

A 1944 graduate of Pendleton High School, Barbara then graduated from Northwest Nazarene College in Nampa, Idaho, followed by graduate teaching work at Oregon State College, the University of Oregon, and the University of New Mexico. Her teaching career spanned from elementary school in Caldwell, Idaho, to junior high and high school English and physical education at Nampa schools. In 1963, Barbara taught at Thurston High School in Springfield, Ore. She moved on to teach English at Ontario High School in Ontario, Ore. During her 21-year tenure, she was named Teacher of the Month numerous times, and awarded Teacher of the Year in 1981. Many of Barbara’s students became lifelong friends.

Post-retirement, she cared for her garden, read many books, followed politics, and was a great fan of the Boise State and UO football teams. She also kept in contact with and enjoyed visits from many of her former students, and she will be missed by her best friend Ileana Oakes of Ironside, Ore.

In 2005, Barbara moved to Eugene, Ore., to be near her three nieces, Tammy (Plant) Lutz, Pamela Plant, and Kim Plant, all of Eugene, as well as her honorary nephew, Mike Lutz, each of whom were caregivers for “Auntie B.” Barbara’s additional surviving nieces and nephews are Elaine Kononen Cutting (Rod), Arni Kononen (Lynne), Robert Kononen, Adrythe (“Rusty”) Kononen Bramer, Clifford “Kip” Kononen, Michael Kononen and Kristine Kononen. Barbara will be remembered by her family and close friends for her loyalty, wit and sense of humor, and by all as a great lady.

Arrangements by Sunset Hills in Eugene. At her request, Barbara will be buried alongside her mother at Olney Cemetery in Pendleton, Ore.

