



## Alicia Nell Kubesh

April 20, 1924 - April 29, 2011

Glendive, Montana: Alicia Nell Kubesh, age 87, passed away on April 24, 2011 at the Eastern Montana Veteran's Home in Glendive. Visitation will be held from 1:00 P.M. until 5:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. on Thursday, April 28, 2011, and from 9:00 A.M. until 12:00 P.M. on Friday, April 29, 2011 at the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 2:00 P.M. on Friday, April 29, 2011 at the Evangelical Church of North America with Celebrant Sandy Silha and Pastor Robert Canen officiating. Interment will be held in the Dawson Memorial Cemetery in Glendive. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements. Nell was born April 20, 1924 in Tiegen, Montana, the daughter of William F. and Ella V. (Walker) Archer. She graduated from Grass Range High School as Valedictorian in 1941 and then attended Billings Polytechnic Institute where she met a handsome Army Air Corps pilot in training from Dawson County. She also attended the University of Montana in Missoula, Montana. Nell married John E. Kubesh on August 17, 1944. After John was discharged from military service in December 1945 they made their home on their farm northwest of Glendive where they raised seven children. In addition to working with John on the farm and participating in the activities of her children, she was very involved in many state and community organizations. Nell had a quiet strength and demonstrated strong leadership capabilities. She was elected to the Dawson County High School Board and was appointed by Governor Ted Schwinden to the Coal Impact Board. She was

active in Dawson Resource Council, Northern Plains Resource Council, Dawson County Democratic Central Committee, Democratic Women and she served on the Dawson Community College Foundation Board, belonged to Makoshika Toastmistress Club, Veteran's of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, Near and Far Homemakers Club, Dawson County Farmer's Union, WIFE, & America Agri-Women. After moving into Glendive, Nell continued her civic involvement and enjoyed playing bridge. She was preceded in death by her husband, John in December 2010; her parents; her brothers, Victor, Deane and Jack Archer. She is survived by her sisters, Peggy (Bob) Kenney of Townsend, Montana; Nancy (Eric) Seiffer of North Chili, New York; her children, Terry (Connie) Kubesh, Janette (Frank) Legato, Grant (Mary) Kubesh all of Glendive; Juanita (Rusty) Martin, Nancy Jo Kubesh (Ron Rykowski) of Billings, Montana; Patricia (Carl) Theriault of Fort Kent, Maine; and Barbara Kubesh of Seattle, Washington; Fifteen Grandchildren, Rob (Fran) Kubesh, Blaine (Siobhan) Kubesh, Rachel Huncovsky, Ross Martin, Wesley Martin, Jennifer (Vern) Miller, Gina (Mark) Michael, Brent (Melodie) Gross, Amy (Scott) Neuman, Sara Gross, Vladimir Kovalik, Jean-Luc Theriault, Joe Theriault, Zachary (Megan) Kubesh, and Julia Kubesh; fifteen great-grandchildren, Paige and Kaitlin Michael, Kara and Kelsi Miller, Garrett and Alaina Gross, Elise and Evan Neuman, Meghan and Ciara Kubesh, Aidan and Claire Kubesh, Landon, Izaak, and Beau Huncovsky. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: [www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com](http://www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com). As we remember Alicia Nell Kubesh today, the respect, the admiration, the love for her intensifies as we recognize her tremendous influence on the lives of family, friends, and community. Nell was a woman who was incredibly smart and educated, who quietly, but strongly and stoically lived her principles; who took responsibility seriously, who led by example and hard work. She understood and valued how important her role as a wife, mother and grandmother were, and she unselfishly gave of herself, her time, her energy, and her knowledge to the people she loved and to the organizations and causes she believed in. One of Nell's accomplishments during her life was to write "Early Reminscing",

the memoirs of Alicia Nell Archer Kubesh. From these memoirs you will hear Nell's own words about various people and times in her life. Nell grew up on the homestead near Tiegen, Montana. About her youth, Nell reports, "I suppose we were very poor, but because everyone else was in the same situation, it really didn't bother us much." Of her mother, Nell stated, "Mother was the one who insisted that all of us should have as much education as we could handle. She won out over Dad's objections... My family then consisted of three older brothers and two younger sisters." About her education, Nell relates that school was three miles from home and since it was quite far for a six year old to walk, she says, "I didn't go to school until I was seven. I had been eager to learn, and with some push from Mother... I started in the third grade. Then I really had to work to maintain my place." "High school was quite uneventful, with most of my time used in studying or worrying about my own insecurities. I enjoyed sports a great deal and participated in track and basketball...it seems to me sports are a great way for those participating to learn to deal with authorities and accept discipline." Nell was a good student, and found chemistry to be "fascinating and intriguing. From high school, Nell went on to Billings, Montana and entered Billings Polytechnic Institute. She thoroughly enjoyed her experiences there. It's also where she met "Johnny." Nell wrote, "John was getting some credits to qualify for the Air Force program, and came into the dining hall to study, since his room was chilly; at least that is what he told me. So after my shift was over, I would stop and visit for awhile." John completed his courses, was accepted in the Air Force, and left Billings for more training. Nell transferred in the fall to Missoula, but found the experience disappointing. She and John decided to marry, and met in Billings while John was on leave. They were married in the home of a friend by a judge the night before John had to leave to get back to Nebraska. John wanted Nell to accompany him, and they both went by train early the next morning to Nebraska. There, they purchased an Indian motorcycle with money borrowed from John's brother, George. Nell says, "John enjoyed it

immensely. I got my chance to travel around and see more country than I had ever dreamed of seeing. He would come home with a watermelon in his saddlebags and that was our supper.” Eventually the training ended and John’s B17 bomber crew left for England the weekend before Christmas in 1944. Not able to find work, Nell returned to Montana, where she found out she was pregnant. The war ended in August, but John didn’t get back until September when Terry was just ten days old... Nell says, “From there our life together was back on track.” John, Nell, and Terry moved back to Glendive to John’s parent’s home place on the farm, where they lived for the next five years without running water or electricity. After four more babies, Terry was ready for school, forcing the decision to be made to move the house to an area closer to a school and to a place that would have water and electricity. A spot was chosen, a basement dug and the house moved. Nell and John lived in the basement for the next ten years while they remodeled the house. Nell says “when we finally moved upstairs, it seemed like a mansion.” As a wife, Nell was the quiet partner. John called her his “bride.” Nell was known amongst the family for her extraordinary tolerance for John’s onion breath kisses. Granddaughter Amy states that, ‘boy, did grandma love grandpa!’ After 66 years of loving and living, they could communicate with a look, they continued to hold hands, and they still had a special light in their eyes for each other. The farm was Nell and John’s kingdom. John worked it and ran it, and Nell did whatever it took to support him and his work, and make his home his castle. She kept the books, fed the hired men, ran to town for parts, tended a huge garden, raised chickens, hauled water. Nell and John were instrumental in establishing a school for the area children. Education was very important to Nell. Nell tells of these times in her memoir; times at the country school, enjoying activities such as spring picnics, and Christmas programs, times of working the cattle, training the horses, haying, harvesting crops, hail storms and blizzards. One of Nell’s most important roles was as a mother. Nell’s sister remembers Nell remarking when they were growing up, that she was only going to have one child because they were so much work! Nell and John

raised seven children on their farm. Her children characterize their mother as a woman of high morals, who set a good example. Nell was honest, and had integrity, and if she said she would do something, she did it. With her children, she was a teacher and a role model. She encouraged her children to experience many things, and involved herself in making that happen. It might be taking time to make trips to town for piano and swim lessons, or getting involved in a Farmers' Union camp, which was held during the busy time of harvest. Not only did the Kubesh children participate, but Nell was a camp leader. Nell was a 4-H leader, teaching her children and neighbor children, and learning herself about cooking, raising rabbits and horses, and sewing. All five girls learned to make gathered skirts. A niece, Elaine Salsbury, learned to sew from Nell, something Elaine loves to do and now does as a living. Nell and daughter Janette were 4-H leaders for Nell's granddaughter Gina, teaching a group of town girls about horses and farm life. Nell and her kids traveled over the gravel roads to town to get groceries, deliver eggs to people, and deliver cream to the creamery, with kids hanging out every window! Nell enjoyed the holidays because it was a time for family. Easter was her favorite because it was a time of baby chicks, colored eggs, children, and the season of new beginnings. It's somewhat ironic that she died on Easter Day. Besides the baby chicks, which Nell so enjoyed, she loved her cats. Some better than others, but there was always a cat close. If Nell was sitting down, there would likely be a cat in her lap. Reading was an important part of Nell's life. She taught her daughter Pat to both read and write. And most days, after lunch, Nell would read to her children. For herself, Nell enjoyed biographies, and books and articles about the woman's movement, and women in farming. Nell's children claim that Nell was one of the first of the bra-burning generation! Nell's kitchen was the heart of the home. She was always cooking and baking for her large family and the hired hands. There was weeding, gathering, and canning to be done from the huge garden Nell and the kids tended. At harvest, Nell and her girls would haul big pots and pans full of hot meals out to the men in the fields; meals that were served on tables with

tableclothes and real dishes, and then they return home to do dishes and start cooking for the next meal. Sometimes, on the way home, there would be time to stop and pick chokecherries to make jam with. It was in Nell's kitchen that her children and grandchildren learned to cook. It was where important conversations occurred. There was a great deal of working, listening and teaching that went on in Nell's kitchen. For her family it was the center of the world. Nell was an intellect and she enjoyed learning. She taught herself to crochet and knit. She made afghans and doilies for family and to give away to many good causes. She taught herself bridge with a computer program and it became one of her favorite pastimes, and one she could share with granddaughter, Rachel. As neighbors, John and Nell were always there to help, sometimes arriving not knowing how much they were needed. It might be a fire that got away from a neighbor in the wind and was heading for a haystack, with Nell in the right place, at the right time to grab buckets of water. It might be food delivered at a needed time. It might be taking in the school teacher and the children from the school during a blizzard and making a birthday cake with M&M's on top for the young girl who had to celebrate a blizzard birthday. It might just be a cup of coffee and a friendly visit. But Nell and John could always be counted on. Nell made time for many community and state organizations, and boards. She didn't just belong, she was an integral part of them all. She was both a worker and a leader. She was elected to the Dawson County High School Board; education was something she felt very strongly about. She was most proud of her work to get teachers a decent health insurance plan. Nell was a passionate Democrat, serving on many committees, working on election campaigns, working hard on many agendas important to her. Her son-in-law, Carl, remarked how she had earned his respect as a staunch Democrat who worked tirelessly and put the welfare of the masses in front of any one individual's gains, just as she had given so selflessly to her family over the years. For her involvement in these organizations, Nell received many awards, including being the 1991

Democratic Woman of the Year for Montana. And Nell did not do this alone. If you were in her family, you worked at the fair booths, put signs in peoples yards, went door to door handing out pamphlets, listened to political debates and speeches, met candidates. As grandson Brent says, she taught civic responsibility to her children and grandchildren. Grandson Rob says of his grandmother, "Grandma was engaging and loved to discuss current events and politics. Her wit was rarely matched. I admired her ability to freely discuss both sides of any debate topic-yet it didn't take long to understand which side she had more affection or passion for." Nell had no prejudices when it came to people. She hosted people out at the ranch from around the world. She let troubled city boys stay with the family over the summer months. Her home was a popular stopping place for extended family, friends and neighbors, friends of her children and grandchildren, hunters, politicians, people from all walks of life. Anyone and everyone was welcome in her home. Granddaughter Amy observed that her grandmother was a strong, thoughtful woman who was always working to quietly change the world for the better. Nell was an important part of many lives. Niece Elaine Salsbury would go out to stay at the farm with her cousins. Nell was like a second mother to Elaine, and Elaine would have adopted her if she could have. She wanted to be just like Nell, and grow up to have seven kids, because Nell made having a large family appear so fun with all the reading and games and time she spent with her children. Nell's large family only got even larger. Nell has fifteen grandchildren. She was the grandma everyone wants and should have. She was patient, supportive, wise, and loving. She was a constant presence in their lives, never changing. She always had and took time for each person, making room in her immediate world for you to help, to experience, to mess up. Right or wrong, you knew she loved you. The smell of baking bread, the taste of warm, oven fresh rolls, the hot chocolate, card and board games she would play with the grandkids, watching television together, collecting eggs, going to the root cellar for potatoes, are common memories. Each grandchild has their own special memories of Nell. The following are a few they wish to share today.

Grandson Rob had a middle school writing assignment on energy. Grandma helped Rob to research coal gasification, her idea. When Rob presented his paper, his teacher wasn't familiar with the process and challenged what he had written, until Rob showed her his proof sources. Grandma had pulled strings with her legislative pals and contacts on the coal board for the latest updates on the energy source. Rob says it was one of the best "A" assignments he ever did. A favorite memory for Granddaughter Rachel is the walks on the farm she and Grandma shared, with Grandma teaching Rachel all about the wildflowers. Brent remembers Grandma always keeping an eye on the grandkids, nothing much got past her. He and Blaine got sprayed by a skunk. They had washed off, and were headed into the house, when Grandma met them at the door. With a look and a few gestures, the clothes came off and she rubbed Brent's arm with an onion before letting Brent into the house. With all the mischief Brent got into on the farm, he does not ever remember Grandma yelling or scolding, but everyone knew Nell could make a very strong statement with just the lift of her eyebrow! Granddaughter Amy appreciated how Grandma handled life with grace and calm. She tells of Nell checking cows in her Mercedes, and gritting her teeth as she wrestled with gates, probably wanting to swear. But she never did swear, Nell was a lady. Amy loved her grandmother's hands, which were always busy with some project or cooking or maybe just stroking one of her favorite cats. Both Amy and Brent can attest to Grandma's garden hoe being her favorite tool and weapon of choice. Nell was a weed and snake killing machine! Grandson Wes remembers that grandma was kind and generous, and he will miss her special, happy laugh. Granddaughter Jennifer relates these memories; "One time grandma saw a new hairstyle she thought she could duplicate. As the recipient of that haircut, I can safely say the world did not miss out on a beautician." Jennifer finishes her thoughts about Nell with these words. "Grandma was a strong and independent woman who inspired me to realize that we are the masters of our own destiny. No magical being is in control of us, making our decisions. As a young child, she once told me there is no pot

of gold or leprechaun at the end of the rainbow, but you can enjoy the rainbow for what it is, light refracting from droplets of water in the sky.” Granddaughter Gina loved to stay at the farm with her grandparents. She enjoyed waking up in the morning to the sound of the rooster crowing and the smell of potato pancakes. Gina liked to play dress up in Nell’s big walk-in closet, especially trying on all the different shoes grandma had. In a birthday letter to her grandma, Gina wrote; “At your house, I learned how to do things that most kids would never have the good fortune of learning; like how to knit, bake bread, can fresh vegetables from the garden, pluck chickens, (not my favorite) and simply enjoy the peace of country living.” That birthday letter from Gina to Nell was a letter of memories with Grandma and of love and experiences shared. While Nell’s family was going through their many photos, they noticed that Nell seemed to look the happiest when she was holding a baby or was with her grandchildren. She loved it when her grandchildren and great-grandchildren came to visit her in the Veteran’s Home. You see, for all of Nell’s accomplishments, and there were many, her greatest accomplishment and the one she was most proud of was her family, each and every member! She greatly loved each one of them, and they loved her.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Alicia Nell Kubesh*

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December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM