



Shirley Delamater

February 17, 1929 - July 31, 2009

GLENDIVE, MONTANA: Shirley S. Delamater, age 80, passed away on Wednesday, July 8, 2009 at the Glendive Medical Center Extended Care Center. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 10:00 A.M. on Friday, July 31, 2009 in the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements. Shirley was born on February 17, 1929, in Roseburg, Oregon the daughter of George and Helen (Armstrong) Helms. Shirley moved to Montana with her family as a small child. She was raised and educated in Butte, Montana graduating from Butte Central High School with the class of 1946. After graduating from high school Shirley attended the University of Montana at Missoula, Montana. Shirley married Robert N. Delamater on February 21, 1949 in Butte. Shortly after that, they moved to Roundup, Montana until 1963 when they moved to Glendive and established their home there. Shirley worked as a bookkeeper at the United Building Centers in Glendive from 1963 until her retirement in 1992. She became a member of the P.E.O. in 1958 in Roundup, Montana serving as president from 1969 - 1970 and 1974-1975 in Glendive. The fellowship with her P.E.O. sisters was a very important part of her life, as well as visiting and playing bridge with her special bridge partners each month. Shirley valued her friends and looked forward to spending time with them. She was happiest when her monthly calendar on the fridge was full of luncheon dates. For over fifty years Shirley showed her love for her children and grandchildren by

spending countless hours with her beloved sewing machine making beautiful clothes, quilts and curtains. Shirley's smile will be missed by all those who knew her, especially those friends she made while working at UBC. Shirley was preceded in death by her husband. Survivors include daughters, Melissa Delamater and Debi Delamater both of Glendive, Carrie (Mike) Thomas of Indianapolis, Indiana; two sons, Robert Delamater, of Glendive and Russell (Donna) Delamater of Magnolia, Texas; daughter, Kelly (Corey) Spencer of Glendive; four grandchildren, Thea Rae Delamater (Sean Whalen), Sara Rose Delamater (Blake Fohl), Scottie Kaye Christensen (Spencer), Taryn Spencer; one great grandchild; Trae Delamater-Fohl; one brother, Alan Helms of San Marcos, California. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com Shirley S. Delamater Life Tribute Service Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home Chapel, Glendive, MT July 31, 2009 Song: "Wind Beneath My Wings" Urn bearers present urn Welcome: Master of Ceremonies Reading: "Apostle's Creed" by son, Rusty Delamater Speakers: Carrie Delamater Thomas, Thea Delamater Video Tribute Eulogy: Celebrant "When everything we say or believe or do is gone and forgotten, the who we are remains. The kindness will still reach out and touch. The honesty will still teach. The acceptance will still give worth. And a loving heart never dies." The loving heart of Shirley Delamater will never die. The kindness she has shown to family and friends has permanently touched their lives. The life lessons and skills she taught are imbedded in the hearts of her children and grandchildren. Her non-judgemental way of accepting people for who they are will always be appreciated. And the hearts that knew her as a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, in-law, and friend will always remember her with love. Shirley grew up in Butte, Montana, with her only sibling, a younger brother, Alan. Her father's job took him out of town quite often, leaving most of the parenting to her mother, who tended to be a bit on the stern side. Shirley's mother was an English teacher, but for added income her mother would sew and sell undergarments. Shirley referred to her mother as a hard worker. After graduating from high school in Butte, Shirley went on to college at Missoula,

Mt. Her intention was to become a Home Economics teacher. It was in Missoula that Shirley met her future husband, Robert Delamater, on a blind date. Robert was home from the Navy and on the GI Bill. He moved to Billings, and Shirley followed to be closer to Robert. She began classes at Rocky Mountain College in Billings. She was on the year book staff at Rocky and many students wrote in her yearbook that they would never forget her contagious “giggle”. But Shirley gave up her goal of being a home economics teacher to become a homemaker and wife to Robert. Eventually, Shirley and Robert and their growing family settled in Glendive where they owned and operated the United Building Center. Those years of running a business and raising a large family were busy ones for Shirley. In spite of working at UBC, Shirley would make sure she was home every day when her children came from school. She felt that was very important to her children. The evening dinner meal was family time. Dinner was at six, everyone sat in the same places every night, and being the wonderful cook that Shirley was, you could expect a large, balanced meal complete with dessert. But to get dessert, you had to eat your vegetables. Shirley’s kids did not like vegetables, but they sure did like dessert. Shirley would set a timer and the children had to try to get the vegetables finished in anywhere from one minute to five minutes; they never knew for sure how long their mother would set it for. Thank goodness for the dog, and the drawer in the table. That dog and drawer ate a lot of peas. Shirley’s kids tell about their sister, Carrie, stuffing vegetables into the sides of her chipmunk cheeks and then excusing herself to go to the bathroom where she would spit them out. Carrie says that sometimes, when her mother would set the timer and say “eat your vegetables or go to bed,” Carrie would just say goodnight. But no matter, when everyone was in bed, Shirley would bring dessert to Carrie’s room. It was a busy, active, and sometimes tense household when the five children were in high school and junior high. So when Shirley found out that she was pregnant with a sixth child, she cried for 3 months. But when baby Kelly arrived, Kelly brought with her a sense of

peace that changed the dynamics of the entire family for the better. With such a large family to provide for, one of the things Shirley did was to make her family their clothing. An accomplished seamstress who loved to sew, Shirley turned out quite the wardrobes for everyone in the family. Son Rusty distinctly remembers how his mother loved sewing with bright colors. You could always find a Delamater in a crowd; they would be the ones in yellow, orange, or lime green. An amusing story that Shirley related to her friend, Helen Ballantine, happened one Christmas. Shirley had made her granddaughters, Thea and Sara, clothes to give them for Christmas. After opening the gifts, the granddaughters thanked their grandmother telling her that they really liked the clothes and yes, they fit fine, but maybe next year could she just give them money! Shirley chuckled over that many times over the years. But also over the years, many favorite pieces of clothing made by Shirley have been wore by her children, passed down to her grandchildren, wore by extended family members, and still saved for the next generation. They have become treasured heirlooms. The items you see here today were made by Shirley, and very dear to the hearts of Shirley's family. Every family member has something special sewn by Shirley just for them. And Shirley and her sewing machine crafted many toys, doll clothes, pillows, and quilts given as gifts to family and friends. With her sewing table set up in the living room in front of the television, it was often the hub of the house. For daughter Kelly, the whirring of the sewing machine into the late hours of the night was comforting. The hazardous side to all this was the pins. Pins that bit you in the foot if you approached the sewing table to visit. Pins that you would find in the armpit of your new clothes, left there from fittings. Pins everywhere. Pins and needles bring many memories and many smiles to Shirley's family. Shirley was a busy and productive homemaker. She was an excellent cook and baker. Family members got their favorite meal and cake on their birthdays. She had a special cake for every holiday, such as white cake with cinnamon hearts for Valentine's day. The aroma of fresh baked rolls and bread and cookies would fill the house. "Cleanliness was next to godliness" and she kept a clean,

comfortable, well-ordered, and inviting home. Shirley loved to decorate. She would decorate for each season, she decorated for every holiday, and her children's rooms would have themes she would decorate around. Although she tried to inspire her children to be good housekeepers by having contests with prizes for clean rooms, only one of the six children really took that to heart. Shirley's home reflected her busy hands. She and her husband did many projects around the house. They went through a period when they antiques all their furniture. They got into the art of decoupage in a big way. Daughter Melissa can still point out some of their work hanging on the walls at the Gusthauf. And granddaughter, Sara, smiles at the way they signed their work with the letters "SRD." It stands for Shirley and Robert Delamater, but SRD is also the initials of her name, Sara Rose Delamater. And just as her busy hands were reflected in the world around Shirley, her busy heart was reflected in the lives of family and friends. Shirley took up golf, a sport she really did not like to play, because her husband loved to play. She did not interfere in the plans or adventures of her growing children, but allowed them to experience life and its consequences. Son Robbie, especially, tested her fearlessness, taking her on dirt roads in Mexico that Shirley was sure she would never return from. But he could never talk her into going skydiving with him. When Robbie took up hitchhiking as a long-haired teen, Shirley took up the mantra for his exploits that "no news was good news". She called Rusty her "little cottonpicker". And in raising six children, probably uttered the words "Judas priest", many times. Sandra Delamater called her the best mother-in-law you could have. She greatly respected the philosophy that Shirley lived by and that was, "if you can't say anything good about someone, don't say anything." Shirley never said a bad word about anyone. She had a special way of making those around her feel loved. When daughter Kelly was in third grade, she had a difficult time going to school, wanting instead to stay home with her mother. Kelly would wake up nights, anxious about this and Shirley would hold her and rock her for hours. Kelly would go to sleep in her parents' bed, and wake up in her own bed. When she would ask her mother how she

came to be in her bed, Shirley would tell Kelly that an angel must have carried her there. When the family moved from Roundup to Glendive, it was a difficult move for Debi. Her favorite person in the world was her Granny in Roundup. Shirley saw to it that Debi spent a month or so each summer with her Granny. And later in life, Shirley had her own granddaughters come to spend time in the summers with her. When granddaughter Sara was at loose ends, Shirley invited her to come live in Glendive. Shirley wanted to give Sara support and encouragement as Sara looked for a direction for her life. Shirley was a warmhearted person who knew the value of being there for family and friends. Shirley was a great supporter of our community. She followed the local teams, attending many games. She always shopped at home. She was always interested in people and what was going on with them. Shirley had a hotline to Carol Swanson and her weekly hometown news articles, loving to give Carol information about the Delamater's activities. Shirley was very proud of her children and would take great pains to introduce them to any and all, loudly and proudly. Shirley loved people. She loved to watch people, visit with people, socialize with people. When she retired, Shirley went shopping every day, not to just shop, but to see and visit with people. And friends, she loved her friends. Helen Keller spoke for Shirley as well when she said these words, "My friends have made the story of my life. In a thousand ways they have turned my limitations into beautiful privileges, and enabled me to walk serene and happy..." Shirley's friendships throughout her life were so very important. During her growing up years in Butte, Montana, Shirley was a part of "we five friends" and these ladies remained friends throughout her lifetime. After high school, when everyone went their separate ways, they kept up with each other by keeping a "circle letter" going every year, and seeing each other occasionally. Over the years, Shirley belonged to many groups of women, some sisterhoods that were formally organized, some just recreational, ladies who enjoyed each other's company while they played golf or bridge together, had weekly church meetings, or met as a birthday club. Shirley's favorite

activity was to go out to lunch. One of her biggest joys was to see the calendar on her refrigerator filled with lunch dates. But what was most important about these times with friends, was the shared comradary. Shirley would often tell how much fun she'd had visiting and laughing during these times. She loved being involved in activities with her friends, and exchanging stories about life over coffee or lunch. And counted among her friendships were those with the members of her family. Certainly, Shirley beautifully fulfilled the roles of wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. But incorporated into those roles was Shirley's friendship to these important people in her life. Some of her lunch dates were with her daughters, and she loved to travel to see her children and grandchildren, and go out to eat in new places. A favorite trip was with her daughters to Billings to the Alberta Bair Theater and out to eat. Eating out at every restaurant in Dickinson after a treatment helped her get through chemo. Shirley's walk through life was a busy one, and not always easy. But Shirley walked it with dignity and grace, humor and love. Daughter Debi observed that Shirley allowed her children and grandchildren to find their own paths in life, never trying to mold them into some image she might have thought they should have been, or interfere with their plans. Shirley provided friendship, support, and encouragement for them to explore their possibilities. She was never judgmental and provided a warm, open and comforting home for her family and friends. Shirley touched many, many lives during her 80 plus years on this earth. She loved her family, her friends, and her community. And Shirley was loved by them. Although Shirley will be greatly missed, she will be held in our hearts forever. Let us now take a few moments to remember Shirley and her touch on our life as we listen to the song, "Amazing Grace." Song: "Amazing Grace" Celebrant: One of the important organizations in Shirley's life was the PEO. This sisterhood of ladies was a part of Shirley's life for over 50 years. At this time, the ladies of the PEO have a special tribute to Shirley. Speakers: PEO ladies Closing: Celebrant It is an important day when we stop to bear witness to a person's life and times among us, the difference her living and dying made among family, friends, and

community, and to take time to express our grief, our hope, our wonder and our memories. Thank you all for being here for this important time. Melissa, Debi, Carrie, Kelly, Robbie, Rusty, and all of Shirley's family, as your friends and community, we grieve with you and we grieve for you. Our world is a bit less bright as we recognize what our community has lost with Shirley's death. And, always remember to push in your chair. There are many views about the hope that waits for us beyond life, but there is one undeniable and ever present hope we can all share. That is the hope found in memories. "We live on in the lives of those we touch; we live on in the lives of those who love us; no one is dead until they are forgotten." Shirley Delamater will be alive as long as she is remembered, and who could ever forget her? Who could forget her busy hands, her busy heart, and her contagious laugh and her enjoyment of life? The stories her life created will keep her memory and her presence alive long into future generations. "You can shed tears that she is gone or you can smile because she has lived. You can close your eyes and pray she'll come back Or you can open your eyes and see all she's left. You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday Or you can be happy for tomorrow, because of yesterday. You can remember her, and only that she's gone Or you can cherish her memory, and let it live on. You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back Or you can do what she'd want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on." (Anonymous) Please bow your heads and join Shirley's daughter Debi in saying "The Lord's Prayer." "The Lord's Prayer" Final Tribute: Celebrant In life Shirley was a seamstress. For her family, Shirley was the needle that wove the colorful threads of love, support, encouragement, kindness, creativity and humor through the lives of those around her. As you are ushered from your seats, you will pass by Shirley's urn, where the family has placed needles for each of you to take. Let these needles remind you of Shirley and may your touch on the needle symbolize the thread of friendship between you and her. Please leave the needle warmed by your hand and heart in the pillow made by Shirley that has been placed on the railing to the left of Shirley's urn as you exit. Thank you for your presence here today. Let

us listen to a final song, "Tears in Heaven."

Tribute Wall



“ *Shirley Delamater*

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