



Doretha Elaine Elyea

March 15, 1920 - December 23, 2014

Doretha Elaine (Zerbel) Elyea, age 94, of Wauchula, formerly of Marshall, Michigan, was called home to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on December 23, 2014. She passed away peacefully at home with her loving family by her side.

Doretha was born on March 15, 1920 to Henry and Avis Ruth (May) Zerbel in Schultz, Michigan. She graduated from Marshall High School in 1938. She married Harry R. Elyea on June 23, 1940, and shortly after their marriage, they moved to Chicago, Illinois, where they both attended the Moody Bible Institute. Their first child was born the next year, and Doretha stayed home to care for him while Harry continued on to graduation in 1944. Shortly thereafter, with two young children and one on the way, they traveled to Nigeria, West Africa where they served as missionaries with the Sudan Interior Mission until 1968.

Doretha loved to play the piano and accordion and was very talented and accomplished on both. When she was born again at the age of ten, God gave her the gift of playing the piano by ear, and she could play everything she knew with lots of enthusiasm and spunk. She was also a very gifted artist and enjoyed sketching profiles of her children as well as doing many oil paintings.

She is survived by her nine children: Daniel Elyea of Okeechobee, Frances

Cook of Marshall, Michigan, Thomas Elyea of Portage, Michigan, Douglas Elyea of Belmont, Michigan, Shirley Aeschbacher of Versailles, Missouri, Iva Grennell of Spanaway, Washington, Lorna Couch of Kentwood, Michigan, Timothy Elyea of Rockford, Michigan, and Roxann Burton of Wauchula; 33 grandchildren; 48 great-grandchildren; and her sister Virginia Shillings of Coldwater, Michigan.

She was preceded in death by her husband Harry in 2011, her parents, brothers Lohrman Zerbel and Marshall Dean Zerbel, and son-in-law, Rick Taylor.

A memorial service celebrating her life will be held at the West Eckford Church in Marshall, Michigan at a later date. Interment will take place in Oakridge Cemetery at that time.

Memorial contributions may be made to Child Evangelism Fellowship of North Dakota, NW Chapter, 9225 66th Avenue NW, Bowbells, ND 58721. For assistance with memorial contributions, please send to West Eckford Church, 19697 F Drive South, Marshall, Michigan 49068.