

Mary Brooks, 83

Aug. 8, 1930 - June 1, 2014

HARLAN — Mary Lee Anna Brooks was born on August 8, 1930 to Charles and Edna (Wilkins) Thomas in Memphis, MO. The family moved to a farm near Troy, where Mary was raised. She graduated from Troy High School with the Class of 1948 with honors in music, basketball and the school paper.

After high school, Mary was united in marriage to Russell Earl Brooks on June 6, 1948 after he returned from serving in the military during World War II. They were united in marriage by her uncle at the Troy Methodist Church where she was a long-time member. After their marriage, the couple made their home in Fairfield; Nebraska City, NE before settling in Harlan to raise their four children: George,



Linda, John, and James. Russell started his own Securities and Commodities Firm in Harlan in 1965 establishing the first branch office of R.J. O'Brien & Associates, the nation's oldest and largest independent futures brokerage firm. Mary worked right by his side licensed to do insurance, securities, real estate and commodities as a pioneer for women becoming involved in the financial industry. She remained active her entire life working beside her son George, who continues their over fifty year relationship with R.J. O'Brien and Associates. Mary's other two sons have a long time business relationship with the firm as well. Her family always came first and she loved spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She loved her birds and enjoyed feeding and watching them. Mary was a fifty year member of the American Legion Auxiliary, the Order of the Eastern Star Lebanon Chapter No. 8, and was very patriotic. She was active in the United Methodist Church, the Myrtue Medical Center Auxiliary, founding member of the Harlan Band Parents organization and many other civic and school organizations. Mary died on Sunday, June 1, 2014 at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, NE, having attained the age of eighty-three years, nine months, and twenty-four days.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, husband, brother Samuel Thomas, and sisters: Ellen Reisch, Carol Dougherty, Myrtle Thomas, and Doris Poling. She is survived by her children: George Brooks and his wife Cindy of Harlan, Linda and her husband Allen Schmeling of Spirit Lake, John Brooks and his friend April Grant of Gravois Mills, MO, and son James "Bugz" Brooks of Chicago, IL; six grandchildren: Eric and Angela Brooks and their children, Mya and Makai of Sioux Falls, SD; Dr. Joseph and Katrina Brooks and their children, Mark, Connor, Truman and Rosalie of Davenport; Matthew and Autumn Schmeling and their children, Caleb and Avery of Spirit Lake; Andrea and David Stewart and their child Avery of Tracy, CA; Anne Marie and Nathanael Donovan of Orlando, FL, and Michelle Schmeling of Pierre, SD; sisters, Gladys Shelton of Hot Springs, AR and Cora Mae and her husband Leland Davis of Moulton; sister-in-law Norma Jean Brooks of West Liberty; other family members and friends.

Pastor Donna Ewert officiated the service on June 5, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. at United Methodist Church in Harlan. Dianne Lawson was the pianist. Serving as casket bearers were Eric Brooks, Joseph Brooks, Matthew Schmeling, Andrea Stewart, Anne Marie Donovan, and Michelle Schmeling. Interment was held at the Harlan Cemetery in Harlan.

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