

Leona "Irene" Peterson, 84

March 6, 1928 - Oct. 2, 2012

SHELBY — Leona "Irene"

Peterson, the daughter of Otmann and Ida Marie (Johnson) Nielsen, was born on March 6, 1928, in Shelby. She was raised in Shelby and graduated from Shelby High School in 1946.

Irene married Wayne Willard Peterson on November 10, 1946, at the Shelby Lutheran Church in Shelby. The couple farmed at Corley and Walnut, before moving to Avoca, while Wayne was driving truck. They returned to Shelby in 1950, and Irene was employed by Grant and Ellen Rihner as a child care giver and housekeeper. Wayne and Irene were blessed with seven children. Irene loved baking and cooking, and established a baking business from her home. She also worked as a baker and chef for area



restaurants. For the next twenty years, Irene found joy in working for REM-Leadway as a craft teacher at their Shelby facility. Following her retirement from REM-Leadway, Irene assisted people in the community with transportation for various appointments and errands. She also helped others with both child and adult care duties. Irene was a lifetime member of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Shelby, and had been baptized and confirmed there. She had served terms on the Church Council, as Sunday School Superintendent, Bible School Superintendent, and was a member of the Ladies Aide and "Couplettes". Irene had numerous hobbies: ceramics, woodworking, garage sales, history, and genealogy. She enjoyed designing and making applique/pieced quilts for each family member. Irene also enthusiastically participated in Pinochle Club and Bingo. She was a member of the Legion Auxiliary for 32 years, the Shelby Alumni Association, PTA, Senior Citizens, Bridges, the Rebekahs in Shelby, and assisted with various community events. Irene Peterson died on Tuesday, October 2, 2012, at Myrtue Medical Center in Harlan, having reached the age of 84 years, 6 months, and 26 days.

Irene was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Wayne Peterson, on December 18, 1981; one sister, Norma Agnita Hansen; two brothers, Paul L. Nielsen, and Eric Nielsen (in infancy); and two infant great-grandsons. She is survived by two daughters, Linda (Gene) Merdinger of Underwood, and Terry (Glen) Zimmerman of Council Bluffs; five sons, Leslie (Tina) Peterson of Gretna, NE, Jeffrey Peterson of Green River, WY, Kevin (Sun) Peterson of Shelby, Clark (Sue) Peterson of Reedsburg, WI, and Jon (Linda) Peterson of Walnut; two brothers, Ivan Nielsen of Omaha, NE, and Wayne (Linda) Nielsen of Surprise, AZ; three sisters-in-law, Janice Nielsen of Hancock, Genevieve (Roger) Madsen of Omaha, NE, and Marlene Peterson of Denver, CO; one brother-in-law, Daniel (Donna) Hansen of Vista, CA; 17 grandchildren; ten great-grandchildren; and other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, October 6, 2012, at the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Shelby, with Pastor Duane Anunson presiding. Marian Eckmann, Bonnie Peters, and Joshua Peterson served as musicians. Honorary casket bearers were Caml Etleman, Theresa Peterson, Kari Merdinger, Roni Siebels, Elizabeth Peterson, and Julia Peterson. Active casket bearers were Micah Peterson, Brent Peterson, Jacob Peterson, Isaac Peterson, Sam Peterson, Jim Zimmerman, Joseph Peterson, Joshua Peterson, Jarad Zimmerman, Jeromey Peterson, and David Zimmerman. Burial was in the Shelby Cemetery. Condolences may be left online at burmeisterjohannsen.com

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FUNERAL HOME

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