

## Connie Jean Herrington, 64

Sept. 1, 1953 - May 13, 2018

**HARLAN** – Connie Jean Herrington was born September 1, 1953, to James Edwin and Norma "Jean" (Bowen) Herrington in Mt. Ayr. She attended kindergarten in Clearfield until she was unable to see. The following year, she attended the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School in Vinton. After several years as a student it was determined that Connie would have to be taken for further training, as the IBSSS School was only for the blind and not the deaf. She could not attend



the School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs because she was blind. After discussion from many entities, Connie's further education came before the State Executive Council which approved the expenditure of funds to allow Connie to attend training at the Washington State School for the Blind and Deaf in Vancouver, WA. After returning home during the first Christmas break, Connie taught her parents and sister the fingerspelling and for the first time in many years we were all able to have Connie understand what we were saying to her. It opened up a whole new world of learning for Connie. She continued her instruction in Vancouver for a total of four years and then came back to Vinton, along with two of her instructors that helped to open up a deaf blind school there. Connie was with the graduating class of 1973 at the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. At the age of 19, after spending a month of examinations and tests, at the University of Iowa Hospital, in Iowa City, about 50 specialists from all over the world tried to determine why Connie had become deaf and blind. At the time, because of the diagnosis of spinal cerebellar ataxia, they estimated that Connie would not survive past the age of 30. Her neurologist calls her the miracle lady and said they would have to name this ataxia after her as hers was so unique.

Connie went on to work at Options of Linn County doing a variety of jobs. She has attended Camp Courageous and in 1988 she attended the American Association of the Deaf Blind National Conference, in Baton Rouge, LA. After the death of her mother, Connie came to live with Pam and Roger Rust, in Harlan and worked at Concerned, Inc. working for a total of 43 years. After an illness in May of 2016, she had resided at the Avoca Nursing Home and Rehab Center in Avoca.

Connie passed away on Sunday, May 13, 2018 due to complications from the ataxia and pneumonia. She was preceded in death by her parents, Jim and Jean Herrington of Marion.

Those left to cherish her memory are her sister Pam Rust (Roger), nieces Sarah Lesch (Josh), Tatum Lange (Mac), Nephews Ryan Denton (Breanne), Todd Denton (Ashley), Travis Rust (Ruth), 11 great nieces and nephews, step mom Rosemary Herrington, step brothers Jim Freeze (Ann), Tim Freeze (Shana), along with many loving relatives and friends.

An 11 AM funeral service was officiated by Pastor John Albertson on Thursday, May 17, 2018 at Pauley Jones Funeral Home in Harlan. Ryan Denton, Todd Denton, Travis Rust, Josh Lesch, Mac Lange, and Madsen Lange served as casket bearers. Interment was held at Benton Cemetery in Benton.

Pauley Jones Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

*Pauley Jones*  
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