



Margaret Anne Bohls

April 29, 1934 - April 12, 2018

MARGARET ANNE (HANSEN) BOHLS Margaret Anne Hansen was the fourth daughter born to Herluf and Lulu Hansen. She entered the world on April 29, 1934 in Lyman, Iowa. The first girl in that family was Elizabeth (Betty) Louise and then Phyllis Marjorie, followed by Kristina Marie. After she was born the family moved to a farm 10 miles northeast of Atlantic where sister #5 entered their lives, June Eleanor. Margaret was named for her father's sister, Edel Margrethe and Anne for her Grandmother Hansen. She has always loved her given names. The rest of her growing up years were spent on this farm. Her daddy lost the farm on which she was born through the terrible time of the drought in the 1930's. He tried so hard, but then the mortgage holders, which were often insurance companies, would not work with the borrower and give them any slack. This was a crushing blow to him. At about the same time sister Phyllis contracted what is thought to have been encephalitis and lost her sight. Betty did a lot of fast growing up at that time filling in for mother when she had to be with Phyllis in Iowa City. Phyllis attended the Iowa School for the Blind in Vinton, Iowa and the travel to get to and from school was a heavy burden on both Phyllis and the family. It was a miracle to have lived through those days of financial and medical problems. To be an offspring of Herluf and Lulu, was to be encouraged to be a self starting person, with high moral character and more honest than the day is long. Honesty, to begin with was taught at a very early age, when the children made their trek to town for essentials. In this case it was some school supplies, most exactly an eraser.

In an unusual manner, her father gave a sister and Margaret a coin (probably a nickel with which to purchase a new eraser for school. She had to walk by an ice cream shop and told her sister to go ahead, that she would catch up later. So, she bought an ice cream cone, then went to the dime store and stole the eraser. She thought she was the greatest. Then on the way home in our Model T, her sister said, "Why did Margaret get ice cream and I didn't"? Her parents were so wise, neither said a thing, and she thought she was home safe. They unloaded the car and then her daddy came and said, "I think we need to make a trip back to town". That was all, but the trip was in complete silence until they pulled up in front of the dime store. Then her dad said she should go confess to the clerk and return the eraser, which she did. This is during World War II when gas was rationed, plus a chunk of the day was wasted because of that activity. There were no lectures, but the impact was tremendous. Margaret's parents were very well educated. Her mother was a teacher who earned her degree in Kansas and later had her credit transferred to Iowa. Her father was not able to attend high school, but went straight to Highland Park College in Des Moines, spending a year there before being needed at home. He spent the rest of his life being self taught - always reading and learning. The parents were there for the children during their childhood. They were technically 'home schooled' in many ways. Her daddy always gave an answer for everything, maybe not right away, but he did answer. They were officially educated in a one room school. Mother was her teacher in eighth grade, as she began her teaching career in Iowa. She was a tough taskmaster that did not let Margaret get by with anything - no chance of being biased. The farm was full of fun times too. There were lots of trips up the mulberry tree to eat berries, swinging in the swing from the big tree out front, studying the stars with dad at night, nursing a baby pig back to health when it was born and seeing the baby chicks picked up at the post office when they arrived there. Sunday afternoons were often making scrapbooks with mother and eating popcorn in the winter. In the summer, some of the family or close friends would share in a picnic in the yard. Early in the

summer, they made a trip to the woods to pick gooseberries and fight off the mosquitos. Later, they would picnic in the woods and take long walks with daddy looking for wildflowers. Other times of the year they would listen to special records on the record player that used a cactus needle to play them. They also might venture out for Elk Horn, Iowa, her father's hometown and go to church there and visit with the family for a day. But most often they had to be home for chores, though. Her father made a terrific child psychologist. If they wanted to do something, he would turn and ask how they thought it should be done. Margaret built her own closet in her room using that scenario. It wasn't that he would not help, he would, but they were expected to think it out first. Mother taught the basics of being a homemaker by teaching her to sew at a very young age (even if she did rip out about everything she did several times). This was done by having the children help in growing and preparing food (begrudgingly) and by learning to do the laundry (without electricity or running water) and to take care of themselves. Margaret was particularly excited when the feed delivery man would deliver sacks of feed for the chickens as they were able to pick out a new print for their clothing. The feed company knew they had to have at least three sacks that matched! When it was time to go to high school, the farm did not have bus service, so Margaret stayed in town with a family the first year. Her daddy had to take her in on Sunday night and pick her up on Friday night. The last three years of school she stayed with other families and worked for her room and board, watching children and housekeeping. There never was a question about if she had time for studies; she just had to make time. Even though they were faced with tough times growing up, Margaret didn't regret her childhood years at all. There was always a lot of nature things - birds, etc. There was always a playhouse in either the corn crib or cob shed. There were beds full of paper dolls in the winter and doubling up on the other bed. There was always a faithful Fido around and a whole passel of cats/kittens to enjoy. Responsibility was learned, from work in the fields, tending to the livestock, raising a garden

and learning to sew. One learned quickly to care for ones self. The small farm of 80 acres was a real wonder. Her dad rented it when they first moved there in 1935 and was able to pay for it in full in the mid-1940's - in cash. He was one of the first farmers to terrace the sloping land at the north end, to tile a pasture area to become productive and she remembered so clearly when he was the first to have 100 bushels of corn to the acre. Her father was a genius at coming up with little time saving creations to make life easier. There was a gate hinge, for one thing, that was one of a kind. It incorporated a double swinging, self closing hinge, with no springs, very unique. Margaret's husband found out years later, patenting any thing mechanical is a long drawn out and difficult process even living in a big city with technical conveniences and legal help. Her daddy did try to get recognition for his expertise, but was not successful. The theory of "use it up, make it do, or do without" fit the family well and they all learned early to find ways to save money. Margaret had pigs, cows, chickens, corn, oats, alfalfa, clover, flax, and sorghum on the farm. Crops were rotated to bring the best yield from the land. The fields were weed free, but not by some chemical, it was from hard manual labor. Rocks had to be continually removed from the fields by hand, as a result of glacier movement from years ago. Her mother contributed her share by churning butter, dressing chickens, picking strawberries or whatever else would be purchased by folks in town. Mother canned or preserved all the food they ate - meat and vegetables. The farming was done by horses for many years which meant long hours and sharing help at harvest time. It was such a thrill to have neighbors come in and help with haying, corn shelling, threshing and other necessary processes to harvest and store the crops. It was not until around 1950 that her daddy was able to purchase a Farmal tractor and ease his work load. Feeding the extra help put an equally heavy work load on her mother and the sisters, in preparing the meals for the volunteer harvest crews. By the time Margaret was born, there were no grandparents living. Her father had two sisters that they saw fairly often. One of the aunts lived in California for a number of years. There were also two brothers that lived out of state and were

rarely seen. Her mother came from a large family of 12 and had grown up in Kansas where her family lived. They visited them very rarely. Although they did not have many relatives close, she did have many good friends to enrich her life. The first summer on the farm by Atlantic, the barn, corn crib and two story hog shed burned to the ground. She vividly remembers someone holding her and seeing that fire. Many young people these days would collapse in the circumstance she and her parents endured. In the process they learned not to expect instant gratification and that honest work and patience will let one realize a dream. When she graduated from high school in 1952, she was able to be hired on at the telephone company and enjoyed being an 'operator'. Through friends in Atlantic, she met a gal whose husband was a friend of Art Hazelton. Art was making several trips to Atlantic and he wanted to bring his friend Vic along and they needed a girl for him to meet. Margaret was chosen and she decided that blind date was meant to be. His introduction to her family must have meant it was true love, as they were certainly different. Vic has provided a home for her and three children. They all shared a self-sufficient, law abiding, honest life. She often said, "No one else could have loved me and put up with me as Vic has done." A memorial service will be held at 12:00 p.m., Saturday, April 21, 2018, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Hampton, 1465 Olive Ave, with President Sosa Garcia officiating. Lunch will be served at 1:00 p.m. at the church. Please RSVP for lunch to Michael at or call Broderick at 641-857-6627. A private family graveside service will take place in the Dumont Cemetery.