



Mary Bjelland

April 2, 1933 - January 23, 2021

Mary Bjelland, 87, of Iowa Falls and formerly of Radcliffe, passed away Saturday, January 23, 2021 at Hansen Family Hospital. Woodley Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Iowa Falls assisted the family with cremation care.

Mary Jane (Stanerson) Bjelland was born on April 2, 1933 in Emmett County, Iowa to John and Edith (Hanson) Stanerson. She was welcomed by sisters: Esther (Helgeson), Ruth (Knutson), Naomi (Mager), and brother, Frank (Stan) Stanerson. The Stanerson family was proudly Norwegian and farmed outside of Dolliver, Iowa.

As a young girl, Mary helped with chores on the farm and followed her dad and Frank everywhere. Her regular chores were to pick eggs and wash the cream separator. She also set up wash stations for the workers during the threshing season. Mary loved the farm and all the seasons in Iowa. She grew up fishing with her dad, ice skating, swimming, riding horses and playing with her brother, cousins, nieces, and nephews. Her father instilled a love of the earth and animals and an appreciation for music in her. Her mother taught her cooking, baking, sewing, and compassion for others. Their values stayed with her for life.

Mary was educated in Estherville, Iowa public schools and graduated from Augustana Academy in Canton, South Dakota. After high school, she attended Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa. Her goal was to be a social worker. She had many friends, and she worked during her college years. She was a nanny, a waitress, and an aide in a hospital.

Mary met Don Bjelland at Waldorf, and they were married on January 2, 1954. They lived in Morris, Illinois, for just over a year before Don accepted a teaching position in Radcliffe, Iowa. Mary remained in Radcliffe until August 2020, when she moved to the Heritage Care Center in Iowa Falls, Iowa.

During her work life, Mary worked at the turkey plant in Ellsworth, Iowa; Swede's Drive-In;

owned the variety store in Radcliffe; worked as a realtor for Caleb Knutson Realty; and worked as a Unit Secretary on the oncology floor of Mary Greeley Hospital in Ames, Iowa. As a seamstress, Mary fashioned many weddings in the region.

Mary had many hobbies and interests, including reading, sewing, painting, and anything Christmas. She was known for her love of Christmas and Christmas crafts, most notably her Santa's. Her children and grandchildren all benefited from her skills with clothing, wedding dresses, fabulous costumes, and more. Mary enjoyed trips to see plays and musicals, Colorado, zoos, West Bend Grotto, drive-in movies, Germany, Minnesota lakes, ISU basketball games, California, Kentucky, and family visits. She enjoyed her grandchildren's sports, dance recitals, and activities. Her blender demonstrations are a favorite memory that brings a smile to her daughters' and friends' faces. Mary loved her church and was very involved with Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Radcliffe. Over the years, she enjoyed helping as a deacon in the kitchen, painting as needed, decorating for each season, Ladies Aide, choir, teaching Sunday school, collecting items for the needy, and making pillowcase dresses for Haitian children. The essential facet of life for Mary was family. She was a wonderful mother, grand, mother, and aunt.

Mary is survived by her daughters with Don, Lavonne (Gordon) Chin of Salinas, CA, Brenda (Jim) Stotser of Iowa Falls, IA, Pamela (Brian) Fields of Smithfield, KY and Teresa (Dana) Johnston of Mingo, IA; grandchildren, Chip (Angel) Seymour of Ocean Beach, CA, Chelsea (Tom) Capitani of San Jose, CA, Dustin (Madeleine) Stotser of Springfield, MO, Bjorn Stotser of St. Charles, MO, Guthrie (Cortney) Stotser of Raeford, NC, Leif (Fairley) Muehleck of Kailua-Kona, HI, Madison Fields of Louisville, KY, Lily Fields of Smithfield, KY, Carina (Levi) Johnston-Hilton of Marengo, IA, Morgan Johnston of Ankeny, IA and Chase Johnston of Cedar Falls, IA; great-grandchildren: Lilia, Maddox, Xander, Rowan, Camilla, Cosette and Kalypso, with one on the way.

Mary adored her nieces and nephews and their families, and she was a second mother to many of her daughters' friends. She welcomed Don's wife, Denise, and their son, Derek, into the family and enjoyed their company. Family gatherings included everyone and were loud and boisterous with good food, dance parties, games and lots of love. Her family will remember Mary as caring, sassy, friendly, quirky, creative, kind and forgiving. She was deeply loved.

Mary is preceded in death by her parents; her siblings; 3 brothers-in-law; 4 nephews; 2 sons-in-law; and her former husband.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Mary Bjelland Memorial Fund, or your favorite charity,

are requested. The Memorial Fund will be donated to Santa's Little Helpers-Hardin County. Donations may be mailed to Mary Bjelland Memorial Fund, Security State Bank, 207 Isabella Street, Radcliffe, IA 50230.

A service and celebration of life will be held on May 16, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Radcliffe, Iowa.

Tribute Wall

JM

“ I remember Mary as a good friend of my mother, Darlene Rorem. I learned about blender demonstrations from them! They enjoyed many good times together and Mary's kindness is in my heart. My sympathy to her family.
Jan Rorem Moe

Jan K Moe - January 28, 2021 at 10:26 AM

DS

“ I'm so sorry for the loss of your mother. She was one of a kind and she always showed me kindness through the years. I have a special spot in my heart for Mary.. I didn't know that she wasn't in Radcliffe any longer. Now I know why I couldn't get a hold of her... My the Lord comfort you and your families.
Diane (Sorensen) Smith.

Diane A Smith - January 26, 2021 at 03:35 PM

KL

“ Sharing in your sadness for the loss of your mother and father. Aunt Mary was a fun-loving, creative, adventurous soul. She will always hold a special place in all our hearts. All you girls were her sunshine. Kathy Long

Kathy Long - January 25, 2021 at 04:54 PM