

# **ESTHER ANDERSON CHRISMAN OBITUARY**

Esther Anderson Chrisman, 89, of Kalispell passed away on Saturday July 30, 2016 at Kalispell Regional Medical Center of natural causes after a brief illness. She was born on July 12, 1927 to Ole and Carrie Anderson in Leland, Illinois.

Esther grew up in Leland, the youngest of five sisters whose parents had immigrated to the United States from Norway. She grew up during the Depression, and had a very vibrant childhood. The Anderson girls all seemed to constantly get into mischief.

Esther attended Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois, where she met her future husband, Allen Baird Chrisman, who returned from service in the Army Air Corps in the Southwest Pacific. She had wonderful stories about bridge parties with her roommates at the Colonial Inn, as well as working at the Food Service in Baxter Hall. Her close-knit group of college friends stayed with her throughout her life. Before marriage she taught briefly in a one-room school in Illinois, an experience that she treasured.

Esther and Baird were married in 1948, and traveled to a dude ranch in Jackson Hole Wyoming on their Honeymoon trip. Esther had wonderful stories about that adventure – her first trip out west – riding the blind horse, the saddle sores, and the blue dye that came out of their brand new Levi's in the rain. That started their love affair with the West.

Shortly after marriage, Baird and Esther moved from Jacksonville to Meredosia Illinois, constructing one of the modern Lustron Homes on East Chrisman Drive in Meredosia, which still stands.

They welcomed son Allen Bond in 1952, daughter Kari Ann in 1954, and brought nephew Bruce Larson into the family in 1962. By this time they had moved to a larger home on the east side of Meredosia. Esther directed the remodeling of the house in several stages – and hosted many wonderful parties and family get-togethers there over the years.

As a housewife, she was a critical factor in her husband's success as owner of the A. B. Chrisman Grain Elevator and A. B. Chrisman Fertilizer Company. On short notice she would prepare lunch or dinner for visiting salesmen and corporate executives that kept them coming back year after year. A number of longstanding professional relationships

and friendships developed from that. Esther was the consummate hostess.

After spending summer vacation trips with family friends in Glacier National Park and the North Fork of the Flathead, they purchased a homestead in 1958 north of Polebridge, Montana. This property became a focal point in the family's life – and she spent summers hosting a wide variety of family and friends. The conditions were primitive – cooking on a wood stove and doing laundry on a wringer washer. Baird and Esther also traveled extensively in the Southwest in later years, enjoying visits to museums and galleries displaying American Indian artifacts, art, jewelry, pottery, and Navajo rugs.

Esther was active in St. John's Lutheran Church in Meredosia, the Meredosia Women's Club, the League of Women Voters, the Meredosia-Chambersburg PTA, Monday Club, delivered Meals on Wheels, was a Cub Scout Den Mother, and served as a Board Member for Passavant Hospital in Jacksonville.

Baird and Esther moved to Kalispell, Montana in 1999 after retirement to be closer to family. Esther was a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Kalispell. She continued to host holiday dinners, family gatherings, and welcomed family and friends at "Esther's Bed and Breakfast." She was well known for her excellent pie baking, her bread rolls, and platters of Christmas cookies. Over the past few years her biggest concern was her limited ability to continue to cook and bake and host parties. Through the efforts of her daughter Kari with help from son Allen and family friends, the large dinners, Christmas parties, Birthday parties and get-togethers were able to continue to the end.

Esther was preceded in death by her husband Baird, and sisters Sigvarda, Charlotte, Anna, and Blanche. She is survived by sister-in-law Garnett Chrisman of Kalispell; daughter Kari Wiley and husband Tim of Kalispell; son Allen Chrisman and wife Charlotte of Kalispell; grandson Allen Baird Chrisman (wife Megan) of Wilsonville Oregon; grandson Mark Chrisman of Portland Oregon; nephew Bruce Larson and wife Adelle of Pleasant Plains, Illinois; granddaughter Rachel Stevenson (husband Kyle) of Indianapolis, Indiana; and grandson Erik Larson of Springfield, Illinois; as well as numerous treasured nieces and nephews across the country.

Services in Kalispell were Sunday Aug. 7 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

A second memorial service will be scheduled for early fall in Jacksonville, Illinois. Memorials in lieu of flowers are suggested to the Flathead Food Bank or Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Kalispell; to Illinois College or Passavant Area Hospital in Jacksonville Illinois; or to a charity of the donor's choice.

Arrangements are under the direction of Johnson - Gloschat Funeral Home in Kalispell.