

Colleen Nielsen

April 15, 1937 ~ February 13, 2024

Our mother was born on April 15, 1937 to Eldren Darger and Celesta Robertson. When Mother was four and half years old her father Ed, as he was called, was in a tragic car accident that took his life. Shortly after her father died, her mother Celesta remarried Ed's brother Dave as his fourth wife. So Mother grew up in Uncle Dave's large family where Celesta had six additional children. She remembered fondly growing up in a big bustling family and loved all of her many siblings.

When she was twenty years old she married Ivan Nielsen as his second wife. Ivan was already married to her younger sister Carol. The two sisters would raise their families together. They moved around alot those early years, and times were tough. As a young mother still in her early twenties her second child, 9 month old Diane, developed bronchial pneumonia and died. Though Mother wasn't one to dwell on painful events, the loss profoundly shaped her life.

Mother continued to have children, thirteen in total, and largely cared for them herself as Ivan was often working two or three jobs to put food on the table and pay the mortgage.

Over the years of their long marriage Ivan would go on to take four more wives and have many more children. Mother's life was truly devoted to being a mother, not only to her own children but to the many other children in Ivan's large family.

Mother was the main person responsible for running the household and she did so, not with an iron hand but by setting a good example. She had a happy demeanor, often singing while she worked. Quite extraverted and social and she loved to be a part of whatever was going on.

A deeply religious person, her relationship to her Heavenly Father was of the utmost importance to her. She was devoted to the gospel and it provided her with guidance and comfort throughout her many years. And she never stopped trying to be a better human being both physically and spiritually.

When most of her kids were grown, she began working full time in an administrative job at Pacific Water, the family business. She would continue to work there until she turned 80 years old. In 2001 she moved into the basement apartment in Bluffdale that would be her final home. Mother had always had an aptitude for art and she picked up her colored pencils again in her later years and produced many handmade drawings for people.

Mother was the family record keeper. She had notebooks of all the names and birthdays of children, spouses, grandchildren and great grandchildren. So many of her grandkids who didn't know her personally, knew her mostly through the birthday cards she sent to them, always with a handwritten note inside. She sent dozens of these handwritten cards each year without fail.

She had great health for most of her life and this was due to her conscientious practices whether it was taking her vitamins, doing her exercises, going for her daily walks, whatever she chose to do, she always did it with complete conviction.

The last few years of Mother’s life were marked by difficulties. In 2018 she fell and broke her hip, just one month after her 80th birthday. This was followed by her son Paul who was killed tragically in 2019 and her husband Ivan who died shortly thereafter, among other losses. In 2022 she had surgery to remove part of her colon and a tumor that had grown there. Through it all she remained independent. The colon cancer returned a year later but this time she was ready to move on to the next life.

On February 13, 2024 at 11:35 in the morning Mother passed away. She died peacefully in her own home, surrounded by her children and loved ones. She is preceded in death by her parents Ed and Celesta Darger, her husband Ivan, her children Diane and Paul as well as Douglas, Guy and Hannah.

Mother didn’t have a long list of career accomplishments or great adventures to tell. Instead, her life was distinguished by her love of work, her humility and her willingness to change and grow. Her greatest accomplishments happened on the inside, at the level of the soul, quiet, and unseen. And they were, perhaps, greater than most, but known only to her and God.

Funeral services will be held at Noon on Saturday, February 24, 2024 at the LDS Church located 14242 Loumis Parkway in Bluffdale, Utah. A viewing will take place from 6-8PM at Larkin Mortuary - Riverton, 3688 West 12600 South in Riverton, Utah on Friday evening, as well as Saturday at the church prior to services beginning at 10:30AM.

Services will be streamed via Zoom for those wishing to attend virtually. To watch the services, please click the "Watch Services" link above.