



## Ann Nelson

May 31, 1928 - August 7, 2020

Martha Ann (Wood) Nelson was born in Chicago, Illinois on May 31, 1928 to Firman Smith Wood and Margaret (McColluch) Wood. During her ninety-two years of life she was known as Martha, Ann, Marty, Mert, Woody, Mom, Grandma, Aunt Annie, Blondie, and Officer Nelson. Although she lived in eight different states during her first 35 years, she was a resident of Yakima, Washington from 1963 until 2020. She passed away in Wenatchee, Washington on August 7, 2020.

In 1933, Ann and one of her sisters spent the summer on their grandparents' homestead near Presho, South Dakota. They experienced frequent dust storms, lots of rattlesnakes, but no running water or electricity. Upon their return to Chicago, they learned that their parents had divorced and that they would be living with their father. In 1935, her father married Ruth Benson and she and her sisters gained a loving step-mother. Over the next decade, she also gained three more sisters while the family lived in Cleveland, Ohio; La Grange, Illinois; and Fort Wayne, Indiana. During her high school years in Fort Wayne, she developed a love of music and played the flute and the violin. Ann was also an active member of the Pilgrim Youth Fellowship. She graduated from Elmhurst High School in 1946 and was the first person to enter Coe College with a perfect score on the Seashore Musical Aptitude Test. Ann attended Coe College for two years and transferred to George Williams College in 1948.

In the fall of 1948, while at George Williams College, she met Ollie Nelson on

a College outing and they had their first ride on a tandem bicycle. They were married on June 11, 1949 and they took their honeymoon on a tandem bicycle. During their 70 years of marriage, they were two wheeled partners in more than 40 states, Canada, England, Scotland, Sweden, Holland, and the Netherlands. They enjoyed a variety of outings in the Northwest with their "Over the Hill Gang" bicycle group and in 1996 they traveled 2500 miles on their tandem bike from Yakima, Washington to Fort Wayne, Indiana for Ann's 50-year high school class reunion.

After graduating from college with degrees in Group Work Education, Ann and Ollie moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan where Ollie started his career at the YMCA in 1951. Sons Eric and Karl were born in Grand Rapids. In 1957, they moved to Fargo, North Dakota. Daughters Kristi, Karen and Kathie, were born in Fargo and, in 1963, the Nelson family moved to Yakima, Washington.

Ann was blessed with a beautiful soprano voice and that opened doors to some wonderful experiences. She sang with four different Methodist Church Choirs and the Yakima Symphony Chorus for more than thirty years. She participated in choral presentations at Carnegie Hall in New York City and at the Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago. She performed in several musicals, and sang at numerous weddings and funerals over five decades, but her most cherished memories were of singing lullabies to her five children. Ann loved the mountains and the ocean and enjoyed many family campouts. She climbed Mount St. Helen's, Mt. Hood, and Mount Adams (seven times). In 1968, she hiked the entire Wonderland Trail around Mt. Rainier. She was a member of both the BX Chapter of PEO and Wesley United Methodist Church for more than 50 years. Ann was a member of the Nob Hill School PTA and a Bluebird leader for several years. She enjoyed playing bridge and was also a talented swimmer who once held the regional age group record for the 100-yard backstroke.

She had a father, husband, son, and daughter who worked professionally for YMCAs. She helped wait tables for banquets at the Fort Wayne YMCA and was a Youth Center supervisor for the Lawson Street YMCA in Chicago. She

also worked as a car hop (at Indiana's first drive-in), a department store clerk, a day camp counselor, a policewoman, an encyclopedia salesperson, and a bank teller. She was an expert seamstress. She made many of her own clothes in high school, her wedding gown in her dorm room at college, and, when finances were tight, she made many clothes for her children.

Above all else, Ann cherished family. It was her priority that her children be close with their relatives near and far. From weekend campouts, trips to the ocean, and many cross country road trips in a Volkswagen camper, Ann's children have been blessed with a lifetime of memories to carry them through. Ann was preceded in death by her parents and step-mother; her husband of 70 years, Ollie Nelson; sisters Peggy Wood, Kathleen (Reed) Troxel, and Merry Wood; and a son Karl Edwin Nelson. She is survived by sisters Susan (Steve) Bailey, and Sallea Wood (Joe Goodman); children Eric (Jean) Nelson, Kristi (John) Heilman, Karen (Carl) Marsh, and Kathie (Steve) Williams; grandchildren Kerri, Libby, Karli, Cody, Heather, Jason, and Chase; and three great-grandchildren.

In consideration of the health and safety of friends and relatives, her Memorial Service will be scheduled at a later time.

# Tribute Wall

JC

“ Dear Eric, Jean, Kristi, John, Karen, Carl, Kathie and Steve, We send our deepest condolences to you in the loss of your mother/mother-in-law Ann. It's always hard to lose a parent, no matter what age. And what a warm and remarkable women she was! It was fascinating to learn more about her in her obituary. I have many fond childhood memories of her. It was a blessing growing up with you and enjoying visits to your home. Your mother always made us de La's feel welcome and took a genuine interest in us. And I admire her and your dad for their work with the Y and staying active. We will never forget either one of them. Praying for you and your family. Love, Jacqueline, Dave, and Alexander

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**Jacqueline de La Chapelle** - September 13, 2020 at 04:29 PM

JL

“ We knew Ann through our YMCA retirees' gatherings. She was such a warm, friendly, and easy to talk with person. She was very remarkable when it comes to biking!

*With compassion,*

*Donald and Joyce Leak  
Camano Island, WA*

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**Joyce Leak** - August 28, 2020 at 01:42 PM

EO

“ Ann and Ollie - a most wonderful couple came into our lives about 20 years ago. We were so pleased to show them the land of Ollies ancestors and to let them see some more distant relatives. In 2002 they welcomed us at the airport in Seattle and brought us on a fantastic journey to Yakima and further to Cannon Falls in Minnesota and a reunion we never will forget. Throughout the years we enjoyed keeping in contact through mails and telephone calls. Can still hear their voices. So sad when there were no answers anymore and we got to know that first Ollie and now Ann no longer were among us. Our hearts are filled of sorrow and our thoughts go to you all in the wonderful Nelson family. Greetings from Sweden!  
Love, Elsie & Gösta

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**Elsie Ohlsson** - August 24, 2020 at 04:59 AM

KM

Thank you for the kind words. I did not have an address to mail to you directly. Mom and Dad so enjoyed the visits, calls, and getting to know you both. I will never forget your visit here. You were a blessing to them both - and to our entire family.  
Karen

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**Karen Marsh** - August 24, 2020 at 11:43 AM

JD

“ While my heart grieves for all in the Nelson family, I'm consoled by a picture in my head of the huge smile on Ollie's face when he saw Ann again. Surely they were the perfect couple. The proof is shown in the wonderful family they leave behind! Love and best wishes to you all. Jim Dwinell

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**Jim Dwinell** - August 21, 2020 at 11:55 AM

EN

“ 8 files added to the tribute wall



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**Eric Nelson** - August 13, 2020 at 04:16 PM

EN

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Eric Nelson** - August 13, 2020 at 01:49 PM

CH

“ So many people say that their parents or grandparents are heroes, but my grandparents were literally my super heroes. They spent their lives dedicated to making their home and communities a better place. For their 50th high school reunion they rode a tandem bicycle from Yakima WA to Indiana while raising funds to help restore the beautiful walking / cycling path along the Yakima River that was damaged in a flood. They were married for over 70 years before my grandfather passed away this last fall. One of the most heartbreaking moments of my life was hearing my grandmother sob after losing my grandfather, saying that marrying that man was the best thing she had ever done. Today they are finally reunited. My grandmother was the most loving and caring woman I have ever met. As I am sad that I can no longer see her again, I am so glad that they are reunited. I will remember that she had the most angelic singing voice. I remember going to the symphony and her love for music. I will always remember how she made the best chocolate chip cookies and always let me lick the beaters. I will always remember how much her face lit up everytime I saw her, even if she didn't recognize my "whiskers." Rest in Peace Grannie Annie. Though you will be missed, you will never be forgotten.



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**Cody Heilman** - August 11, 2020 at 06:24 PM

KM

“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



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**Karen (Nelson) Marsh** - August 11, 2020 at 02:37 PM

KM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Karen (Nelson) Marsh** - August 11, 2020 at 02:31 PM

LB

*Karen, Kristi, and Kathy--this photo connected for me because all of you became an extended family for the Brown family beginning in 1978. The three of you took care of Seth and Paige when we lived on 32nd Ave. and your family stayed connected with us through the years. One favorite memory was when Paige served as flower girl in Kristy's wedding and Ann designed and made Paige's pink dress. I love the pictures of that day. And I always laugh when I recall my getting stuck by the snow and I think all three of you babysat until finally Ollie came to fill in so y'all could get to classes and such. But my most favorite recent memory was when Ann and Ollie came to my home for dinner and to welcome a visit from Larry Lev and his wife, Laura to Yakima. Larry held court and MaryJo Pinnell and Rick kept us laughing with stories from the YMCA and your dad regaled us with stories about his and your mom's adventures on bikes. I'd like to think of your mom and dad riding in tandem through the heavens. Please let me know how I can reach each of you. I'm afraid y'all will vanish to the four winds and I would hate losing you that way. Love to all. Linda Brown*

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**Linda Brown** - August 30, 2020 at 03:37 PM

KM

*“ When tomorrow starts without me, Try to understand,  
That an angel came and called my name, And took me by my hand;  
The angel said my place was ready, In Heaven far above,  
And that I'd have to leave behind all those I dearly love.  
But when I walked though Heaven's Gates, I felt so much at home  
For God looked down, smiled at me, And told me "Welcome Home"  
So when tomorrow starts without me,  
Don't think we're far apart,  
For every time you think of me,  
I'm right there in your heart.*

*I love you Mommy! Give Daddy and Karl lots of hugs. They've been waiting for you.*

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**Karen (Nelson) Marsh** - August 11, 2020 at 02:30 PM