



Dorothy Evelyn Leonard Bishop

April 4, 1921 - November 28, 2020

Dorothy was born April 4, 1921 in Sheboygan, WI to Marie and George Leonard. She was blessed with six sisters: Eileen, Agnes & Angie (twins), Lucille, Catherine and Rosemary. After a tragic house fire and the loss of all their earthly possessions, the family moved to Ekalaka, near Baker, MT when Dorothy was five. Imagine the look on their Uncle Mike's face – a life-long bachelor, when his brother George stepped off the train with his wife and daughters. He was expecting his brother would arrive alone to work and simply send money home. But home had to be recreated in Montana. The family eventually moved to Baker and the Leonard girls attended a one room schoolhouse in Fertile Prairie. Because they lived on a farm with 7 girls and no brothers, Dorothy was happy to help with outside work. She especially loved caring for the chickens and gathering eggs. She helped with the geese for goose down and milked cows. She learned to ride horses and learned a lot as she watched her Uncle Mike break wild horses and then herd them to the nearest rail line across the state border in North Dakota where they were sold to the Chicago police department.

Dorothy's mother Marie impressed upon all of her daughters to get an education and to not to marry a local farmer. Life in Montana was hard, the winters bitter cold, summers blasting hot and the winds seemed to always blow. Marie wrote relatives and friends to make sure her daughters had somewhere to go when they graduated high school and a chance to enter

college. Dorothy and some of her sisters moved to Milwaukee after high school and worked various jobs. Sister Faith (her aunt) arranged for her to go to Edgewood College and she took secretarial courses. It was in Edgewood that she met some wonderful friends and many years later she remembered those days with fondness. She got a job at Western Union for 6 years before marrying Spencer Bishop. She and Spence met at a YMCA dance. Both were shy but hit it off right away and soon decided to marry.

Spencer got a job in Tri-Cities Washington at the fairly new Hanford Nuclear Reservation. Dorothy was reluctant to leave her sisters and family in Milwaukee to travel with her two infant daughters (Mary and Jeanne) to move out west. But she boarded a train to Washington State and settled in the God-forsaken high desert town of West Richland. It must have felt a bit like Ekalaka and Baker Montana, the same extreme weather seasons and high winds constantly blowing sand and tumble weeds. Eventually they found a lot near the Columbia River in the unincorporated town of Kennewick. Spence, with the help of some friends built a sturdy one-story house that stood the tests of winds. That is where they had their other children (Ed, Jim, Sandy, Jerry, Carole, Evy and Margie) and raised their 9 children. Dorothy was ever resourceful, she not only cooked, gardened and sewed clothes and worked outside the home, but when she couldn't afford to buy new furniture, she took it upon herself to learn upholstery!

Dorothy was a member of St Joseph parish in Kennewick, for over 30 years. She was a wonderful mother who encouraged and loved all her children as they took up her traits of being adventurous and independent in life. She created wonderful family memories at holidays and each day.

While she still had young children at home Dorothy became a Montessori teacher and often took care of other children too. The house in Kennewick was ever expanding with rooms added on when necessary. The back yard

had climbing trees and Dorothy encouraged all of her children to climb, explore, and play in the mud. When St Joseph opened a Montessori school in 1988 Dorothy was happy to work there as a teacher until she was 70. The children loved Dorothy and her kind and experienced ways.

After her children were grown Dorothy took up traveling. She ventured to see her children in various places including Alaska where she visited her daughter Margie (husband Jack) and they went dog sledding and saw Northern Lights on her 70th birthday. She traveled overseas to Scotland to attend her son Jerry's wedding and also visited her beloved homeland of Ireland.

In 1992 Dorothy and Spencer moved to Bellingham WA to be closer to family including young grandchildren. Her son, Jim built a lovely house for them where Dorothy lived until she was 98. She joined Assumption parish including the rosary group and made good friends. She loved having family over and enjoyed working in the yard and growing flowers. She was one of the first members to join the WWU senior exercise program and regularly took the bus along with students to Western's campus to work out in the gym. Holidays and other visits to her house were wonderful with good food, stories and laughs. She loved to bake delicious pies and cookies for visitors and was getting up early to work in kitchen or around house or garden well into her 90s. She also could still win at scrabble into her 90s!

She was always caring for others and she also had quick wit and Irish sense of humor. Even to her last days she was concerned for others and enjoyed seeing her family including 16 grandkids and 13 great grandchildren and her nieces and nephews who traveled from around the country. It wasn't until the age of 95 that Dorothy agreed to having helpers during the day. Carole, Bridget and Lisa did a wonderful job helping her with chores, cooking meals, having great laughs and trying to win her in games of scrabble. In the summer

of her 99th year Dorothy and her daughter moved to Vancouver, WA. This was closer to her two oldest daughters and their families and just down the road from her oldest grandson and his family. Although masks and social distancing made things different, she was still able to delight in seeing her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Sadly all of Dorothy's sisters passed away in years prior as did her husband Spencer, who passed away on December 2, 1996. Dorothy joined all her dearly departed family and friends in heaven on November 28, 2020. She died at home surrounded by her daughters Mary, Jeanne and Margie. We are so fortunate Dorothy lived to be 99. She would have turned 100 on Easter Sunday. As we reminded her often the meaning of Dorothy is Gift from God.

The family wishes to thank the wonderful staff and caregivers at PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health in Bellingham, WA and PeaceHealth Hospice in Vancouver, WA

Mom's story by Carole Foldenauer: Dorothy Evelyn Leonard Bishop died peacefully, quietly, surrounded by love, at home, a home that was cozy and tidy and welcoming. She died the way she lived. She tended to others for her entire life, and at the end of her 99 1/2 years of a life generously lived, she was tended to by three of her daughters with the care and devotion and tenderness she herself gave to so many. She showed up when someone had a baby, even though she herself was raising her own nine children. She showed up when someone was overwhelmed by life, despite her own daunting responsibilities, when someone received a scary diagnosis, she was there to provide care and comfort. She was a loving and devoted caregiver to her husband Spencer at the end of his life, as well as to each of her six sisters who preceded her in death. At times professional caregivers joined family members to provide care for Dorothy. They quickly, inevitably stopped seeing her as a client and came to treasure her as a friend. Dorothy knew the

strength and sacrifice it takes to be a caregiver and this respect for the profession showed.

She liked to stay busy, putting one foot in front of the other, finding comfort in the many tasks that comprise taking care of the business of daily living. She was organized and determined and took pleasure in cooking and baking and gardening and keeping her home.

It takes a lot of grit and a stubborn streak to live for nearly a century. Dorothy had both, in abundance. She enjoyed challenging herself, long past an age where she could have reasonably put up her feet and said "I've done more than enough, now I'll rest." She traveled to Europe in her 80's, twice, she traveled to Alaska a few times including in the winter where she enjoyed a dog sled ride. She enjoyed a number of road trips including across the country, to see loved ones in Montana and the Midwest. She was a pleasant travel companion. She had no shortage of invitations.

She became a formidable Scrabble player and played well into her 90's. She was known to have stealth moves, allowing her opponents to think they had a chance to win only to place a q or a z on a triple letter score in the last moves of the game, taking the win and delivering a slice of humble pie, sometimes accompanied by a slice of delicious pie she had baked.

She was a woman of faith. She didn't talk much about her faith, rather she demonstrated it in the way she lived. Her Catholicism brought her comfort throughout her life.

Dorothy made better the lives of many, especially children. Her own children, their friends (as she once said, "When I had nine children I didn't realize at first that that would mean having 27 because each one had at least two friends around much of the time."), the preschool children she taught as a

beloved Montessori teacher, and children whose own parents struggled, as well as her grandchildren and her great grandchildren. As one grandchild pointed out “She’s never grumpy when we visit.” She genuinely delighted in children and especially loved funny stories about kids – she loved hearing them and telling them, it was one of her dearest traits and she had many. She herself was the subject of some, like the time she stole a horse when she was five years old. “Actually I just borrowed it, it was very hot and my little sister was only four and I knew she wouldn’t want to walk all the way back home because it was a mile away.” She also managed to get herself kicked out of first grade much to her disappointment. Her habit of taking naps at her desk every afternoon didn’t sit well with the teacher. As she said later, the long walk to school and playing at recess did me in.

Dorothy had a quick Irish wit and it never left her. She was still making people laugh until her last days.

Dorothy follows the many who left before her, those she missed terribly, who called her daughter and sister and wife. She leaves so many behind, who will miss her and remember her fondly, and recall her wisdom and wit and kind generosity. Mother to nine, mother-in-law to six, grandmother to twenty including the spouses and partners her grandchildren brought into the family and whom she warmly welcomed, and great grandmother to sixteen children, all of whom she was so excited to meet and embrace. She has many nieces and nephews to whom she was close, and dear dear friends. She placed a high value on friendship and maintained friendships for decades, even when in the midst of raising nine children. At one point in the 70’s she had six teenagers! At the same time! And she survived! She told one apologetic former wild child, after hearing amends for the teenaged ridiculousness that caused her stress and lost sleep, “Oh, you were never really that bad.” Sometimes kindness is the better option to honesty.

“To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to leave the world a better place and to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Not too long-ago Dorothy was asked, “Did you ever think you’d live so long?” “No, I really didn’t.” she said. “Well, you’ve certainly lived it well.” She really did.

Quotes about Dorothy:

She was a lovely person, so kind and warm and genuine.

Her faith and devotion were very strong

Bridget’s grandson pointing at mom in a crowded living room “She’s the best one down here”

Fun, sweet and spunky. Caring, kind and thoughtful

Always took time to write letters and send care packages

Adventurous and brave. Took many amazing trips with family and friends or on her own.

She’s very special to so many people.

Wonderful and kind teacher. She had a way of calming even the most rascally of kids.

Quote of hers: Children are like horses, curb them but don't break their spirit.

She delighted in seeing children or hearing stories about what they do

Wonderful role model, has left a legacy to be proud of

Quick Irish wit and wonderful sense of humor

Wonderful friend, hard worker, good pie maker, loves her family, full of wisdom, never says a bad word about anybody (even when provoked :) And she's a heck of a scrabble player.

Good advice: try not to worry so much. During tough times just take things one little step at a time and do the next right thing. When making difficult decisions try not to let money be the deciding factor.

Words from her oldest grandson: Prayer of St Jude, learned from Grandma Dorothy strong faith & to treat children with kindness. How to win at scrabble but also how to lose at Scrabble. How to prepare a proper surprise snack for a guest. And how to read.

We have such fond memories of Dorothy Evelyn Leonard Bishop. She was a great mother/mother-in-law/grand and great grand mother, sister, aunt, wife and an adventurous spirit, a traveler, an incredibly hard worker, focused, kind, welcoming, a good bratwurst and beer on a warm afternoon. She played an excellent game of scrabble, she liked a good read and simple pleasures like watching the pileated woodpecker and other birds. She will be missed!

Well what can you say about the best mother anyone could ask for. She always accepted all her children as they were, not what they could have been.

I am proud to have been her son. She will be missed but her legacy continues.

Tribute Wall

CS

“ *What a lovely tribute to a wonderful woman! I met Dorothy a couple times in Bellingham while visiting Margie. I really enjoyed our visits with her. You have a wonderful family – the best legacy she could leave. Hugs to all of you.*

Colleen Cleary Schacht - January 05, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MG

“ *What a lovely tribute to a life well lived and a terrific lady! Our condolences to the family, so glad you have so many years of loving memories to bring you peace during this time of loss.*

Marnie Graham - January 05, 2021 at 12:00 AM