



## Eileen Isabel Bihrer

September 5, 1925 - July 1, 2018

Eileen Isabel (Harter) Bihrer – beloved wife, mother, and grandma – passed away in Bellingham, Washington on July 1, 2018 at the age of 92.

Eileen Isabel Harter was born September 5, 1925 in Lavoy, Alberta, Canada to Ralph and Rosa Barbara Harter. Her Grandma Kercher (her dad's mom) assisted at her home-birth. Over the next several years, she was joined by four younger sisters: Delphia (Delly), Doris, Phyllis, and Marjory.

In 1935, the family moved to Vegreville, Alberta. A church was on the property and they often walked right to church. She had many discussions with her mom and dad about giving her heart to Jesus. On November 17, 1938 she gave her heart to God—both parents knelt beside her in prayer.

On February 11, 1938, her brother Harold Ralph was born. Sadly, he passed away three days later with pneumonia. Shortly after, her parents became foster parents to Fred Smith—our Uncle Fred.

Eileen and her sister Delly were provided an opportunity to move to Vancouver to live with their Grandma Kercher and attended a Christian Bible school. Eileen remembers this time with her grandma fondly. She completed the two-year course then enrolled in business college, working part time to help support herself.

In 1953, Eileen moved to Portland, Oregon. She lived with her sister Delly, and brother-in-law Herb Bock. She lived there for four years and worked in the office of F.W. Woolworth store as their office manager and bookkeeper.

In 1957, she moved to Seattle, Washington. Her sister, Phyllis, decided to join her there. They lived in the University District and attended Seattle First Church of the Nazarene. It was there that she met George Bihrer. Their first date was a group caroling outing at Christmas. They were married August 21, 1959.

George and Eileen's first home was a small bungalow in the Fremont area, which was actually a house boat moved to a residential lot. She often affectionately referred to their first home as the "doll house." After 2 years, they moved to their new construction home on 19th Avenue in Seattle, where Barbara and Bev joined them!

On August 27, 1962, Barbara Denise was born. On December 17, 1963, Beverly Joanne was born.

Over the years there were many fond family memories! Trips to Birch Bay, building a cabin at Point Roberts with aunts, uncles, and cousins. We took many road trips to the Oregon coast, Disneyland, and Houston! We also took numerous trips to Iowa to visit our Granny and Grandad Bihrer, cousins and relatives in the Midwest. Our parents and our mid-West family must have had a good chuckle watching their city girls having fun at the farm!

Eileen worked at Nordstrom for over 30 years; she started out at Nordstrom Best downtown Seattle in the business office, then later moved to Northgate where she worked in sales in the Ladies Sportswear department. She was transferred to Aurora Village to help set up the new store. She was continually

a top producer in the Pace Setters Club. In addition, she was one of the first to pioneer the idea of Personal Shopper. She would load up the car with beautifully suits, blouses, accessories and shoes, and do private visits to her high-end clientele. She made it clear that her family was of top importance to her, and she was allowed to work 9 – 4, Monday through Friday! Of course the perks for Barbara and Beverly were great, and we had many beautiful things to wear. Barbara's favorite was getting to pick out a new ski suit two years in a row when she won the contest for selling the most! We were both approaching working age, so she was able to get us jobs. Initially, Christmas gift wrapping, making boxes and working in the storeroom, but we proved ourselves so that we could move on to work during the peak sales (Anniversary especially).

On February 6, 1988, Eileen's first grandchild was born—Adam Mark Browne. Six months later, July 21, 1988 Daniel Milo joined his cousin. Mom was not quite sure of how to entertain boys— 'play time' was obviously different. As would be expected, she adapted quickly! Soon her house was filled with cars, trucks, and blocks. Two years later, January 17, 1991, Samuel (Sam) Raymond was born. He was always full of more energy putting her to the task of keeping up with his 'shenanigans'. The three boys together were a bundle of energy, but Mom was in her element enjoying every moment with her boys. Finally, October 1, 1995, Aaron Scott arrived to complete the complement. Sorry, Mom, a girl was not meant to be.

Over the years, Eileen loved to be with her grandchildren. She would cook their favorite foods, allow them to have half-half in their cereal, set up play tents and yard games, and plan fun outings. She was always fully present and patient with her grandsons and had a way of making sure they each felt special and very loved.

In 2012, Eileen and George sold their home in Lynnwood and moved to

Bellingham, Washington. On November 14, 2013, the love of her life, George, passed away. The blessing was, that due to her advancing Alzheimer's, she was not aware of his passing but instead referred to him as being very busy and at work. Despite her memory loss, she kept her smile, cheerful attitude, and outgoing personality. She was a favorite at the skilled nursing facility, and her laugh was contagious to those around her.

On July 1, 2018, she left her earthly body with Barbara and Bev by her side, holding her hands and reminding her of how much she is loved. While it is incredibly sad to those she has left behind, her smile and kind heart live on in each of us. We love you, Mom. We are so grateful for your love and impact on our lives. We are the women and mothers we are due to your influence. You are in our hearts forever.