



Frances Marion Ellis Kaaland

August 16, 1920 - February 28, 2019

Frances passed away February 28, 2019, at the age of 98. She was born in Lancaster, WI, to Rufus “Bob” Seely Ellis and Hazel Lisle Ellis (née Thompson), where she lived until the age of 11. Her mother passed away and her father took her and younger sister Lola to live on a farm in Whatcom County. Frances graduated from Meridian High School in 1938 and married Walter Kaaland in 1939. Their daughter Karen was born in 1942.

Frances began working in a factory in 1944 making gas tank sections for B29 bombers. After the war she started working retail and joined the Newberry chain of stores. She worked her way from window trimmer to being the first woman manager on the west coast. She was sent to stores in Everett, Bellingham, and then Longview, where she retired at age 65. She married Richard Leslie and returned to Bellingham to be near her daughter.

Despite working full time, Frances always had a project. She could sew, knit, embroider, and crochet. She enjoyed gardening, renovating, decorating, dancing, socializing, entertaining, and travel. After breaking her hip in 2011 while renewing her driver’s license, she moved to assisted living (Merrell Gardens, aka Brookdale, aka Cordata Court). There she made many additional friends, played pool, wrote her autobiography, and researched her ancestry.

Frances is survived by her daughter Karen LaHatt (Len); granddaughter Taunna Elsner (Scott); bonus grandchildren Lorilee LaHatt Maclin (Nathan), Lyall LaHatt, Lindy LaHatt (Katherine); and great-grandchildren Randy Elsner, Bryli Elsner Blankenship (Jake), Xaiden Maclin and Xeira LaHatt. She lived to meet her great-great-grandchild, Annali Blankenship, born in November 2018. She is also survived by her sisters Lola Marie Osgood and Ruth Selene Long, and numerous nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her former husbands, Walter Kaaland and Richard Leslie; sister Betty June Bailey, and brother Robert Ellis.

There will be a small gathering at Greenacres in Ferndale at 1:00 p.m. at Saturday, April 20 for family members. The family invites you to attend an open house celebration of life from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Karen's residence, 2717 Pacific Street, Bellingham, WA 98226.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hospice House (Whatcom Hospice Foundation, 2901 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham, WA 98225) in her name.

Tribute Wall



“ I HAVE SUCH WONDERFUL MEMORIES OF FRANCES. I FIRST MET HER WHEN I WENT TO WORK AT NEWBERRYS, 1954. EVEN THEN, SHE RAN THE STORE. PETITE, SOFT SPOKEN, SHE GOT THE JOB DONE. I WAS BEST MAN FOR HER AND DICK WHEN THEY GOT MARRIED IN LOS VEGAS. I REALLY ENJOYED THAT. SO MUCH MORE. MEMORIES. JERRY JADERHOLM

JERRY JADERHOLM - February 28, 2019 at 12:00 AM