



Hazel E. Greenwood

April 11, 1921 - July 8, 2016

Early one April morning Hazel Emily (Thompson) Greenwood was delivered to Bresley and Louisa Ann (Bowyer) Thompson in Promise, a homestead community high in the Blue Mountains of Oregon. Family legend has it that she arrived in the midwife's sewing basket. Hazel's sister Lida always looked askance at sewing baskets after that. Sure enough, that same basket would soon bring one baby brother, and then another. All together ten children were delivered to Bress and Annie, five girls and five boys. Hazel was the youngest girl and she was to live a charmed life even though her family had nothing beyond their collective will to survive. They struggled mightily to get by, and things got worse when Annie died in 1930. Bress and the boys found whatever work they could. The sisters cooked and cleaned for themselves and for other families who were better off.

Hazel survived on looks, brains, charm, hard work, and grit. In grade school she wanted to keep her favorite schoolbook of poems but her family couldn't afford to buy it, so she memorized the entire book. Eighty years later she could still recite every word.

After she graduated from high school she became a beautician and started putting money away while she waited for her handsome and dashing fiancé to come home from the war. But one night his plane was shot down over Germany. Hazel's response to his death was to enlist in the Women's Army

Corps, pack a bag, and travel alone by train from eastern Oregon to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, to become a WAC nurse. The saucy redhead the boys called “Tommy” turned out to be a skilled and popular nurse. Many soldiers fell for her but she fell for only one—a lanky sergeant named Don Greenwood. She married him in 1946 and never looked back.

Don’s career required them to travel the world and live in many places, and Hazel cherished her role as homemaker. She was known and loved for her gracious hospitality, her great cooking, her personal style, her independence, and her sense of fun. She was always the last one standing at a party, and the first one to help with the dishes.

When Don retired, they found the home of their dreams and set about living the good life in Grants Pass, Oregon. They were very happy there for 36 years. But in 2008 dementia began to steal Hazel away. She and Don moved to Bellingham, Washington, to be closer to their only child, Cheryl.

Hazel’s last years were spent happily among the amazing people at the memory-care facility first known as Silverado and now known as The Bellingham at Orchard. That became her home, and her caregivers became her family. In her final days, the services of Whatcom Hospice brought immense comfort to her and to her family.

If you choose to remember Hazel, please do it by turning away from fear. Practice love and tolerance and compassion. Think of others first, particularly those who suffer. She treasured small children, animals, and all creatures in need of comfort.

Hazel was preceded in death by Don and by all her brothers and sisters. She is survived by her daughter, Cheryl Greenwood Kinsley, her son-in-law, Dale Kinsley, their children Leon and Peter, Peter’s spouse and children, and

several great and grand nieces and nephews. She will be laid to rest with Don in the Promise, Oregon, cemetery, just a half-mile from the homestead where she was born. There she will find the rest and eternal peace she so richly deserves.

Tribute Wall

CH

“ I was lucky enough to have known this elegant lady. Chuck K7BVT

Chuck - July 08, 2016 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ Don and Hazel...what a team. They were so thoughtful to invite me to their home for lunch on a regular basis...sensing the need to offer me a quiet respite. Don kept me talking, Hazel kept me fed. I loved these two.Hazel...thank you.

Carl Wilson - July 08, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JN

“ I never met Hazel Greenwood. I was looking at the obits the other day and her picture caught my eye so I read about her.. when I got to the part “If you choose to remember Hazel please do it by...” I was so taken by the message I felt a love and respect for this woman I'd never laid eyes on—I even cut out those sentences so profound and yet a simple message we all could use now and for the rest of our lives . Hazel will always be on my “positive” bulletin board –being a former school teacher Hazel’s life will be passed on to countless others and she’ll be smiling down from heaven at the effect she left others upon her passing –thank you — Janet Needler

Janet Needler - July 08, 2016 at 12:00 AM