



Janice Keller

November 10, 1935 - January 18, 2024

Janice Lou Nickel Keller passed away peacefully on January 18, 2024, in her Houston, Texas residence. She was 88 years old.

Janice was born to Otto and Emma Nickel of Bessie, Oklahoma on November 10, 1935. She came along at the height of the Great Depression and grew up wearing clothes made from flour sacks, living in a wooden house with rocks lining the walls to insulate against the harsh winters. Janice helped on her parents' farm by picking cotton, plucking chickens, cooking, gardening, and sewing. During summers she would swim in nearby spring-fed ponds with other local children. As a young girl, she dreamed of becoming a fashion designer in the big city.

Janice attended elementary school at Flynn Country School one mile away, riding there on bicycles with her younger brother, Jerry. She was baptized into the Herold Mennonite Church as a teenager after attending catechism class. She was earnest in her faith and remained active in the church. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Bethel College in Newton, Kansas and a master's degree from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Janice taught English and Home Economics at the junior high school level in Central Kansas, coaching cheerleaders and running school concession stands to help out after hours. She met her future husband, William E. "Bill" Keller, in Wichita, Kansas at a Halloween costume party, where Bill was dressed as Fidel Castro, complete with fake beard and cigar.

Janice and Bill settled in Greensburg, Kansas, where Bill operated the Keller family farm. Janice spent her time caring for her family and father-in-law. She prepared lavish meals for the harvest crews that included apple pie a la mode, served outside by the wheatfields. She was active in the local community, serving as president of the local school board. As a civic leader, she was known as a calm and level-headed leader in times of fractious discussions.

Janice enjoyed baking strawberry-rhubarb pies, playing bridge, and growing irises and peonies. She loved her parents and cared for them in their later years. She was fair-minded and kind and considerate. She will be greatly missed.

She was preceded in death by her husband and her brother, Gerald Nickel. Survivors include her son Kurt (Marion), son Joseph, granddaughters Mary Lou and Katherine, nephew Monte Nickel (Carmen), and niece Cindy Rodgers (Todd).

A memorial service is scheduled for 3:00 p.m., January 27, 2024 at Joseph J. Earthman Generations, 234 Westcott St, in Houston, Texas..