



LaVerne Eugenia Lacey passed away peacefully on July 2, 2009 in Missoula, Montana surrounded by her four daughters.

She was born on July 21, 1925 in Saint Paul, Minnesota to Rudolf and Alma Benert. She attended school in Saint Paul, graduating from Harding High School in 1943. On September 17, 1946, LaVerne married Charles (Chuck) Lacey in Saint Paul. The couple relocated to Queens, New York, where Chuck was employed by Northwest Airlines. While in New York, their first daughter

Diane was born.

After six years in New York, Chuck took a 6-month temporary assignment in Bozeman, MT. LaVerne and Chuck fell in love with Montana and made Bozeman their permanent home. They welcomed three more daughters into the family, Susan, Karen and Janet.

When her youngest daughter started kindergarten, LaVerne began working as the secretary at Whittier Elementary School. Two generations of children will remember her as the lady who collected their milk money and patched up their "owies".

LaVerne was a member of the First Presbyterian Church where she taught Sunday School, served as a Deacon, and sang in the choir. LaVerne's musical interests ranged from classical music to barbershop. She volunteered for the Community Concerts organization, was a devotee of the InterMountain Opera Company and the Bozeman Symphony, and was a member of the Snowbird Chapter of Sweet Adelines.

LaVerne was a talented seamstress and knitter and passed these skills onto her daughters. She was an avid bridge player and a voracious reader.

Experiencing other cultures was of particular interest to LaVerne and Chuck. They travelled to Japan, Hong Kong, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Spain, Scotland, England, Mexico, Peru and Canada. They also served as host parents to international students attending MSU.

LaVerne is survived by her brother, Richard (Dick) Benert of Bozeman; her daughters and sons-in-law, Diane and Warren Knipfer of Rochester, MN; Susan Lacey of Seattle, WA; Karen and Tom Spencer of Great Falls, MT; Janet and Gary Kalkstein of Missoula, MT; seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She was preceded in death by her husband, Charles, brothers, Bill and Bob Benert, and sister, Margaret Sonnemaker.

A celebration of LaVerne's life will be held Saturday, July 11, 2009 at 11:00 am at Dokken Nelson Funeral Home in Bozeman. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, memorials be sent to Bozeman Public Library Foundation, P. O. Box 6242, Bozeman, MT 59771, the InterMountain Opera Association, P. O. Box 37, Bozeman, MT 59771, or the First Presbyterian Church, 26 W. Babcock, Bozeman, MT 59715.