

Blanche (Gastambide) Morris 1924-2024



Blanche Morris was born in Burley, Idaho on April 8, 1924 to John and Marie Gastambide, French Basque immigrants from Arnéquy and Urepel, two small villages in the French Pyrenees. John became a rancher and stockman in Southern Idaho, a life which brought Blanche to the outdoors. Frequent contact with the beauty of nature was a constant throughout Blanche's life. Some of her treasured experiences were coupled with the smell of sage brush and juniper, and the sights of bird life in the open desert. Summers spent with her parents in Soda Springs, Idaho made a lasting impression. Later days exploring the Malheur, with binoculars in hand, were among Blanche's favorites.

The summer of 1942 featured Blanche's enrollment as a freshman at the University of Utah; but a family emergency called Blanche back to Burley after one year. Throughout the remainder of the 'war' years Blanche lived and worked in Burley - until local sons began to return from fighting overseas. One such combat veteran, Rollo J. Morris, returned from service with the 82nd Airborne - in part to convalesce from injuries suffered after the 'big jump' on D-Day. Blanche and Rollo met in Burley and married at the Church of the Little Flower on April 2, 1946. 64 years of marriage ensued until Rollo's passing in 2010.

In 1949 Blanche and Rollo moved to Oakridge, Oregon where Rollo began a career as an educator. His time included service as the last principal and superintendent of Westfir High School. In the early days of life in Oakridge, Blanche and Rollo had two sons, John and George, each born on their mother's birthday. During the days of raising her family Blanche worked outside the home and volunteered in many capacities. Her many interests included service to St. Michael's Catholic Church, Garden Club, Audubon Society - and in the public sector - many years on the planning commission.

A keen sense of curiosity remained with Blanche throughout her 100-plus years. Her curiosity always included the natural wonders around her, but also extended to literature, music, politics, art - and of course family. Weekly updates were essential conversation about the experiences of grandsons Joe (Nyree) and Kevin (Lizette) - and her special pride in their children, the next generation, Blanche's dearly loved great-grandchildren Henry, Vaughn & Nina. Blanche is survived by son George, Sher Castro, and the next generations. She is pre-deceased by husband Rollo, son John, sisters Helen and Jean and beloved daughter-in-law Cheryl.

Special recognition and gracious thanks for Blanche's remarkable care is offered to Pete Moore Hospice House. Blanche lived a long life she passed away on November 17, 2024 after a lengthy stay at the Hospice House. So many nurses, CNA's and staff have become friends and true family to her. We are eternally grateful to each of you.

A funeral mass will be offered for Blanche at 11:00 AM on January 11, 2025, St. Paul's Catholic Church, 1201 Satre St., Eugene, OR.

All are welcome.

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