

*Velma Jean (Shafer/Pederson) Gurwell*

Born Velma Jean Shafer in Chelsea, South Dakota. Velma was the only daughter of Rhiney and Cecil Shafer. Velma was preceded in death by three older brothers, Howard (Bertha), Washington state, Keith (died in infancy), Roy (Margaret), Lead, South Dakota, and her younger brother, Lloyd (Shirley) of Reeder, North Dakota.

At the age of four, Velma and family moved to Reeder, North Dakota, where her father managed a grain elevator, and where she spent some of the happiest years of her life, with friends, dogs, cats, and horses. She especially loved horses, and once confessed that in high school she had dreamed of following the rodeo circuit and riding bucking broncs. Yes, she was a bit of a tom boy growing up. She excelled in sports and loved to hunt and fish...but she was happiest when riding her horse.

Velma graduated from Reeder High School in 1947, and attended Black Hills Teacher's College (now Black Hills State University) for one year. She was dating a farm boy from south of Reeder -- Olin "Pete" Pederson -- who had returned from the army in the Pacific at the end of World War II. The two married September 4, 1948. From that union was born son, Westley, and daughters Linda and Pat. The family moved frequently around the Black Hills, to include Lead, Terriville, New Castle, Wyoming, and a year on the Pederson farm in Harding County. Velma often worked as a cook during those years to help support the family. She also continued to stay active in sports, becoming an excellent bowler and going to State Bowling Tournaments.

On October 19, 1963, she married a Homestake miner, Emil Gurwell, in Lead. With that marriage came two stepsons, Gary and Danny Gurwell, then the birth of son, Scott and daughter, Candace. The family moved to Terry Gulch and later to Fantail, just outside Lead. In 1984, Emil passed away from a heart attack. Velma was soon diagnosed with emphysema and diabetes. She fought both diseases courageously for the remainder of her life. Meanwhile, she continued to support her children, and often times, their children, as she moved from Lead to Rapid City, and finally to Sturgis, where she lived for over ten years with her daughter, Linda, who took care of her until 2011, when her illness forced her to move into the Sturgis Regional Senior Care. She passed away in her sleep on July 20, 2012. Linda and son, Scott, were at her bedside. It was Velma's wish to be cremated and buried between the graves of her mother and father, in the town of her youth -- Reeder, North Dakota. The memorial services were delayed until all family members could attend.

Over the years, Velma demonstrated the power of love -- for her family, her friends, and her animal friends. She especially loved horses, collecting horse

figurines, jigsaw puzzles, calendars, etc. She would always find a home for strays, whether they were cats, dogs -- or humans. Her heart was filled with a rare love -- a love that was unconditional. She has not really left us. She can be found in the hearts, minds and genes of her children, 26 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and her great-great-grandchild... and all their children to come. And we believe she will continue to watch over her family as our guardian angel. We also believe she is now riding with passed childhood friends upon a spirited horse across the green meadows of heaven.



*"Velma Gurwell -- five generations."*

*A Mother holds her children's hands for  
a while. . . .  
their hearts forever.*



*In Loving Memory Of*  
*Velma Jean (Shafer/Pederson) Gurwell*

***Born***

November 2, 1928  
Chelsea, South Dakota

***Died***

July 20, 2012  
Sturgis, South Dakota

***Memorial Services***

10:00 a.m. Saturday, June 8, 2013

Kinkade Funeral Chapel

&

4:00 p.m. Saturday, June 8, 2013

Senior Citizen Center, Reeder, North Dakota

***Officiating***

Wes Pederson

***Musical Selections***

"Amazing Grace" & "In The Garden"

***Sturgis Organist***

Tom Dewey

***Pallbearers***

Danny Gurwell, Jr., Nathan Gurwell, Bruce Hise, Jr., Troy Hise

Shawn Hise, Darin Pederson, Lanny Gurwell, Alex Jonas

Dustin Yuill, Tai Gurwell

***Interment***

Rose Hill Cemetery  
Reeder, North Dakota



*The Twenty-Third Psalm*

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:*

*He leadeth me beside the still waters.*

*He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the  
paths of righteousness for His name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:*

*for thou art with me; Thy rod and  
thy staff they comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence  
of mine enemies: thou anointest my head  
with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life: and I will  
dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

