

Marie Shepherd



Marie Shepherd of Stillwater, a Korean War veteran who presented American Legion School Awards to students at local schools and made scarves and hats for church bazaars and the needy, passed away early Wednesday morning, April 10, 2024, in Oklahoma City after a fall. She was 94. A Celebration of Life will begin at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 25, 2024 at Strode Funeral Home Chapel. Strode Funeral Home and Cremation is in charge of the arrangements.

Marie, who served in the Women's Air Corp as it was becoming part of the newly formed U.S. Air Force. was a member of American Legion Post 129 in Stillwater. She received the Quilt of Valor from Cimarron Quilters in 2017 for her "service, sacrifice, and valor" in serving our nation during combat.

She trained and was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. Although she worked in supply most of the time, she volunteered to assist burn victims in the Korean War as they arrived on the XC-99 Medical Transport.

Her roommate at another base taught her how to knit scarves and hats. They didn't have patterns, so they used each other for sizing.

"We were stationed up at a little base called Goose Bay (near The Arctic Circle), and it was so cold there and there was nothing else to do," she told the Stillwater NewsPress. "And my roommate was always crocheting and knitting."

Her roommate was a major because the base had so few women. While visiting another base, she once was given captain bars during her stay but wasn't able to keep the rank. The rank allowed her to stay in the only women's quarters on base which were exclusively for officers.

Marie had some experience because her mother, Mary Black, crocheted and embroidered. Her mother embroidered quilts, similar to the one that she was presented.

Since that time, she made scarves, hats and baby blankets for anyone who needs them, including churches in the Stillwater area, the Salvation Army and the needy in Perkins. Marie also volunteered at Our Daily Bread and donated baked goods for community dinners.

She was born Maude Marie Black on Oct. 10, 1929, in Parkersburg, West Virginia, only days before the stock market crash that sent United States into the Great Depression. The economic effect was little felt on the Black's farm where Marie lived with her mother,

Mary Alice, her father, Clarence Donald, and her sisters, Cora Jean, and Georgia Elizabeth. Her father raised registered Tennessee Walking Horses. He also worked as a trainer who trained horses to race, including some that raced the Kentucky Derby. He also loved dogs, and he was always bringing home dogs and horses.

Tragically in 1947, Marie witnessed the death of her sister, Georgia, on their way to school when she was struck by a car driven by a drunken driver.

When her sister, Cora, graduated high school in 1951, the two enlisted in the U.S. Army, which became the U.S. Air Force. They had a famous aviation relative. She was related to Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, who led the first raid on Tokyo from an aircraft carrier in World War II. Cora, a photographer for the Air Force, later met him. She also took pictures of returning aviators from the Vietnam War, including later U.S. Senator and presidential candidate John McCain.

She met her husband, Sgt. Lawrence "Dale" Shepherd, in the service. He was a marksmanship instructor and later signals engineer for the Wabash Railroad, later Norfolk and Western Railway.

After they married, she was honorably discharged in 1954. The following year, her daughter, Linda Kay Shepherd, was born in Decatur, Illinois, while Marie's husband worked for the Wabash Railroad.

Marie took education courses at Washington University in St. Louis. Subsequently, she taught elementary school in Wentzville, Missouri, in the early 1960s. She was proud of her efforts to help the low-income farm kids in the rural community.

After her divorce in the mid-1960s, she became a medical technologist working for Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. The hospital changed ownership many times, but she remained for more than 20 years.

When Marie first retired, she stayed in the St. Louis area. Never one to be idle, she worked at a Sears store as a sales associate and drove for the St. Louis Auto Auction.

Marie was a lifelong car enthusiast. She drove mainly Fords and loved Mustangs. In fact, she had a Mustang convertible into her 80s. Tony Stewart was her favorite NASCAR driver, and she watched him regularly on television. But she also liked Indy cars as well. At Marie's urging on a whim, she, Linda and her husband, now retired OSU journalism professor Stan Ketterer, went to the Indianapolis 500 and sat in the infield, returning the same day.

She was also an avid baseball fan. The St. Louis Cardinals and Kansas City Royals were her favorite teams, but she would watch any game. Marie usually watched the game at the same time as Cora and would discuss it long distance.

In 2006, she relocated to Stillwater to be near her daughter and granddaughter, Theresa

Marie Ketterer. Once there, she thrived. For several years, she drove cars for the car dealerships in town, mainly picking up cars at auto auctions and delivering them to dealers here.

Originally, Marie was the only female member of the local American Legion. It was her great honor to present Legion awards to school children in the Stillwater Public Schools. She and her family regularly put flags on the graves, and she donated items and served meals at its annual pancake breakfasts, including its Centennial Celebration where she received her valor quilt.

Like her father, Marie loved dogs. Her life was punctuated with the lives of her dogs. She volunteered at free spaying and neutering, caring for dogs and cats after they awakened from surgery. At the time of her death, she lived with Chester, her beloved yellow American Labrador. Through trips to the dog parks, walks, and Petco trips, Marie and Chester became known as a duo around town.

Marie is survived by: her daughter, Linda Kay Shepherd-Ketterer of Stillwater; her son-in-law, Stanley Eugene Ketterer of Stillwater; her granddaughter, Theresa Marie Ketterer of Manhattan, Kansas; and sister, Cora Jean Black of Elsberry, Missouri.

Donations can be made to Our Daily Bread and the Stillwater Humane Society.