



Myrtle Mae Powers

November 28, 1921 - August 22, 2017

Myrtle Mae (Mueller) Powers was born in her home on the family homestead at the end of the Oregon Trail, outside Oregon City, on November 28, 1921. She was the second eldest of ten children, all with the initials M.M.M. She attended a two-room schoolhouse in the tiny community of Carus, just a mile from the family farm. She learned to recite lengthy poems from a very young age and she entered declamatory contests.

As a young child, Myrtle helped work the family farm and prepare meals for the large family, enduring the hardships of the Great Depression. She would occasionally travel with her father to show and sire the family's prize winning Clydesdales.

Myrtle always aspired to be a teacher and she watched carefully the techniques of the 'good' teachers, learning how to manage a classroom and motivate students. She received her teaching degree from Oregon College of Education at the age of 20, and started her first day of teaching 2nd grade the morning after Pearl Harbor.

Myrtle taught for two years and helped with the war effort during the summers at the Vancouver Ship Yards. She eventually joined the Marines and was stationed in Santa Barbara. It was there that she met Walter Lee Powers, a naval surgical assistant at the base. Their love story has a chapter in the book, "War Bonds: Love Stories of the Greatest Generation" which was published in 2013. They were married soon after WWII was over. The young couple continued their education at Baylor University where Myrtle received her Master's Degree in Waco, Texas, Walter Lee's home town. They were married in Waco in December 1946 where they started their family. They had three boys: Wally, Jim and Tom. They moved to Cheney, WA following a couple years teaching in Portland, OR. Myrtle was a 2nd and 3rd grade teacher at Betz Elementary and Walt was a Professor at EWU. They both continued to live there until Myrtle's passing on August 22, 2017, at the age of 95.

The family traveled the world extensively. They had teaching positions in South Korea as the country emerged from war torn poverty soon after the war in 1961-'62. Since they were not attached to the military, the family lived on a missionary compound in the heart of Teague. It was here that they made lifelong friends with several Korean families. Myrtle continued to make the best Kimchi (Kim Chee) in the Inland Empire.

The family spent another year in central England in 1967, at the height of the British pop

culture. Their three sons attended a traditional British School. Before returning home in Cheney, they were guests at the Van Trapp home used in the film "Sound of Music" where Walter was the speaker at an international conference. Myrtle raised three teenagers in the late '60s with supreme understanding, patience and grace.

Myrtle was a teacher who was loved and respected by all, never shaming or scolding students. She told every student they could have a banana split if they ever came to visit her home, and some returned well into adulthood.

In retirement, Walter and Myrtle spent winters in Hawaii at their condo, summers at the cabin in Priest Lake, and the rest of the time in Cheney, close to family. She picked huckleberries with a passion at Priest Lake and was good and ready this summer just prior to taking ill. She was raised on a berry farm and knew how to pick. She would do anything to find the perfect patch, often emerging from the brush with a full bucket, and multiple scratches and bruises which were her medals of honor. We joked that her secret of long life was the hope of a better picking year next summer.

Walter and Myrtle became close with the congregations at the United Church of Christ in Cheney and the Central Union Church in Honolulu. People would arrive at the church bizarre early to get a jar of the prized "Myrt's Priest Lake Huckleberry Jam." Myrtle had unwavering devotion and faith in God, praying continually as she lived each day. She had the 'simple gift' of 'finding things'. Myrtle never preached and she felt that the word of God was best spread by emulating the example of Christ; simply and uncomplicated: Love, forgiveness, faith, and comfort in Christ. She believed in the power of positive thinking, reciting to herself each day:

"This is a new and wonderful day, and there will never be another just like it. I am divinely guided all day long and whatever I do will succeed. God's love surrounds me, dwells within me, and is always beside me. All things work together for good in my life today. I am a mental and spiritual magnet, attracting all things positive. I will open my mind to new knowledge, and strive for temperance in all things. I will serve the Lord, love all of His creation, and love each person as myself." This is who Myrtle was.

Myrtle is preceded in death by six siblings and her sons Wally and Jim. She is survived by her loving husband Walt (age 92) and her son Tom. Also, by Tom's loving family, wife Jeanne, grandchildren Tab, Dulcy, Melony, Zach and Anna. This family, the five great-grand-children, and the two great-great-grandchildren, will miss the telling of the rare Christmas story/poems that Myrtle recited each Christmas Eve. A Memorial Service will be held Sunday, September 3, at 2:00pm at the Walt and Myrtle Powers Reading Room, located on the 2nd floor of Hargraves Hall at EWU. Memorials can be made to: Powers' Scholarship Fund, EWU Foundation, Powers Scholarship, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA 99004.

Comments



“ The Drummonds and Powers go way back from time at EWU and in Korea. We'll miss Myrt just as we miss Wally and Jim. Our thoughts are with Walt and Tom.
Shirley and Margie D.



Margie Drummond - October 03, 2017 at 02:44 AM



“ My Aunt Myrt was such a wonderful person and was very loved by all of the Mueller family. I will always admired her spirit and gentleness. I aspire to have her positive outlook on life!

DONNA M EKDAHL - September 03, 2017 at 04:06 PM



“ We have fond memories of our get togethers at The Four Paddle Honolulu over the past twenty five years.
Such happy times and we thoroughly enjoyed the conversations with Myrtle and Walter.
A special Lady and we will miss you.
Love Rosemary and Murray Capill One Tree Hill Auckland New Zealand

Rosemary Capill - September 03, 2017 at 03:34 AM



“ Farewell special friend. I treasure the fun times we have shared at counselling conferences around the world. You were always by Walt's side - keeping an eye on him and having fun yourself. A beautiful smile, a beautiful person. Happy memories of your visits to our home in Pukerua Bay and our visits to Hawaii with you both. We are 22 hours ahead of you so today it's our Sunday 3 September and we are thinking of you all at Myrt's Memorial Service. Love dear Walt and family as we all rejoice in memories of a wonderful woman.

Jane Henson, Pukerua Bay New Zealand

jane Henson - September 02, 2017 at 09:13 PM



“ Myrtle always had the biggest smile on her face, just like in the picture here. Such a kind, giving, tough and loving woman. She will be missed dearly by all who knew her!!! Walt and family, you are in my thoughts and prayers. With love and much respect, Dennis Reed and family.

Dennis Reed - August 31, 2017 at 02:41 PM



“ What a special and wonderful lady Myrt was. I have known Myrt and Walt as a couple for many years, shared times in Hawaii, she shared her wonderful egg sugar molds with me and the huckleberry picking stories are wonderful. Always a cheerful nature and a wonderfully giving lady to everyone. She and her smile will be missed but always with us.

Carol Golden - August 29, 2017 at 02:41 PM



“ Mrs. Powers was my third-grade teacher and such a wonderful lady. Even when she would visit at the museum years later, I could never bring myself to call her by her first name. She and Walt shared some good stories and I always enjoyed visiting with them. She was a treasure.

Joan Mamanakis - August 29, 2017 at 12:24 PM



“ Myrt was a special lady. So very kind and compassionate. It has been an honor to know her over the past decade. She is leaving a wonderful legacy. Thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.

Michael Westfall - August 28, 2017 at 12:47 AM



“ I had the honour and privilege to get to know Myrtle over two days recently and was so impressed with her character. What a beautiful soul and the proof was in seeing the love and respect all her family had for her. Thank you for letting me see what a truly gifted human being looked like. Love and respect to all Myrtle's family, Katherine Traxel, RN

katherine traxel - August 27, 2017 at 09:32 PM



“ I went to Cheney High School with wally. I graduated in 1968. My maiden name was Andrea Russell. I send my condolences to all the family. Jim and Wally may you find comfort in this difficult time. I remember meeting your mom a few times. My thoughts and prayers to all the family. Your mom is definitely soaring with the angels and she has done the circle of life. Sincerely Andrea Russell Miller

Andrea Russell Miller - August 27, 2017 at 02:21 PM