



## Joyce LaVonne Christensen

December 3, 1929 - July 14, 2020

Joyce LaVonne (Mitten) Christensen was born December 3, 1929, to Clayton and Johanna (Christensen) Mitten in her parents' home near Kirkman, Iowa. Joyce attended country school, Polk #9 School District of Kirkman, Iowa, completing the 8th grade and then stayed home to care for her ailing mother.

Joyce met the love of her life, Virgil LeRoy Christensen, when the Mitten family first attended Bethel Baptist Church in Harlan, Iowa. After dating they were married on December 27, 1950, at Bethel Baptist Church in Harlan. Her devotion to Virgil was truly special.

Several months after their marriage, Joyce worked at the Harlan phone company as a switchboard operator while Virgil was stationed in Tokyo, Japan during the Korean War. In 1953 when her husband was discharged from the Army, they farmed east of Harlan for several years. Later they moved their growing family to Virgil's homeplace northeast of Harlan to continue dairy farming. She kept busy on the farm keeping a tidy home, delicious food on the table and helping her husband with field work. Joyce never let dust gather under her feet.

In the fall of 1973, Joyce carried her love for baking to the Harlan Community School District's kitchen service as their 'baker' and retired at the end of the 1994 school year. While raising their family, Joyce was a 4-H leader, summer bible school teacher, and a founding member of the neighborhood LNO Club (Ladies Night Out) and a member of the Merry Homemakers Club. Joyce enjoyed Shelby County Fair week and entering multiple exhibits. Her wins included Best of Show in 2009 for her Danish Coffee Cake and twice winning the Purple Ribbon at the Saturday Morning Apple Pie Contest. Joyce loved quilting and made each grandchild and great grandchildren a baby quilt.

Joyce was a member of the Bethel Baptist Church. Joyce, along with her husband, had a passion for traveling the world, camping, snow skiing in Aspen, attending grandchildren's sports events and spending precious time with family and dear friends. Joyce was fun-loving, incredibly kind, had a heart of gold, and always carried a smile!

Her health began to fail in the fall of 2019. She moved to Rose Vista Home in Woodbine, Iowa, where her pleasant demeanor made her a favorite of many of the staff. She passed away peacefully at Rose Vista Home on July 14, 2020. It was very difficult for Joyce's

children to not be with her at her passing due to Covid-19 restrictions. Joyce had reached the age of 90 years, 7 months, 11 days.

Joyce was preceded in death by her loving husband, her parents, and her brother, Merlyn Mitten of Kansas City, MO.

Joyce is survived by one brother JaVain Mitten of Hamilton, MO; one sister Marlene Larsen of Santa Rosa, CA; one daughter, Debbie Christensen Larsen of Harlan, IA; two sons, Tim (Joan) Christensen of Bennington, NE, and Kevin (Sue) Christensen of Omaha, NE; six grandchildren, Cole Larsen and Reece Larsen, both of Carroll, IA, Mitch Christensen and Clint (Colleen) Christensen, both of Omaha, NE, Danielle Christensen of Minneapolis, MN and Devin (Li-Dunn) Chen of Starkville, MS; two great grandchildren, Ava and Augie Christensen; numerous nieces and nephews; and many other relatives and friends.

Joyce Christensen avidly participated in the 'Anatomical Gift Program,' donating her body to the University of Nebraska Medical Center - Creighton University. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Joyce was proud of her Danish heritage; the family requests that memorials be sent to the Museum of Danish America, Elk Horn, IA. Pauley Jones Funeral Home in Harlan facilitated these arrangements. A special and heartfelt thanks goes to Rose Vista Home and Generations Hospice Care for their impressive support and compassionate care for Joyce. Her children affectionately called this facility "Heaven on Earth!"

# Comments

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“ I attended Polk #9 school with all the Mitten kids. I remember so well Joyce and her siblings and how close they were, always looking out for one another. In the winter we all enjoyed sleigh riding together in a field next to the school. And in the spring we used to explore the "canyon" between the school and the Mitten home. It was my joy to have known Joyce, Marlene, Merlyn, and JaVane. As all the Mitten children were, Joyce was a very thoughtful and considerate schoolmate even though I was a couple years younger than she was. May the good Lord held all the family in the palm of His loving and tender hand. Rev. Dr. Ken Heflin, Irvine, CA

**Dr. Ken Heflin** - August 04, 2020 at 10:57 PM

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“ Hi to Joyce's family. I wish to extend my deepest sympathy to you. I worked with Joyce for many years, at the High School in Harlan. I always thought so much of her. I live in Woodbine, now and have been a regular visitor at Rose Vista. I did not know that she was there, until she recognized me one day and called out to me. We had a short visit and I had planned on going back over to visit her and then they had to close their door, to visitors, so I was not able to go back. I am thankful for the short visit and the hug, that we shared. She truly was a beautiful woman, inside and out. Eula Kramer

**Eula Kramer** - August 03, 2020 at 03:26 PM

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“ My dear Aunt Joyce, a special gift to all of us who knew her. Her soft chuckle and sweet smile will forever be held in my mind and heart. I will miss you sweet lady but hold our memories together for a lifetime. Prayers of comfort to her children and grandchildren.

**Lanna(Mitten) Cain** - July 29, 2020 at 03:22 PM

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“ Wishing you peace as you remember and mourn your loss of Joyce, know that you are being thought of with warmth and sympathy. We have such heart warming memories of Joyce and Virgil! Deepest Sympathy.

**Ron & Debbie Brozanic** - July 25, 2020 at 04:00 PM

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“ We are so sorry to hear about the loss of your mother Joyce. She was a wonderful person, and since Virgil was my cousin, we knew Joyce so well. I remember the wonderful visit we had with her when we came over to rose Vista and visited her. Please know we share your sorrow, and our thoughts and prayers are with you all  
Love and god bless.  
Gary-ad Dee Brandt



**Dee and Gary Brant** - July 24, 2020 at 04:40 AM

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“ Thinking of you all! I have wonderful memories with Virgil and Joyce! Such fun loving and gracious people!!  
~ Amy Barrett

**Amy Barrett** - July 21, 2020 at 04:08 PM

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“ Gene And Jan Wilwerding sent a virtual gift in memory of Joyce LaVonne Christensen



**Gene and Jan Wilwerding** - July 20, 2020 at 11:26 AM