

## Clara Simonds, 80

Dec. 21, 1933 - April 16, 2014

**HARLAN** — Clara, daughter of Marius Andreas and Meta (Jorgensen) Pedersen was born December 21, 1933 in rural Kimballton, Audubon County. She had two sisters Martha and Ethel and a brother Morris. Clara's father emigrated from Denmark, as did her mother's parents. Marius Pedersen farmed until his death when Clara was just three years old. He died of double pneumonia complicated by exposure to mustard gas in WWI in France. Clara's family remained in Kimballton until 1945 when they moved to Harlan. Clara graduated from Harlan High School in 1952 then completed a two year elementary teacher program at Iowa State Teachers' College at Cedar Falls. Clara met Harlan Simonds in the



summer of 1953 while he was working in Omaha, NE. They were unofficially engaged before summer's end. Harlan remained in Omaha while Clara returned to college. In December the engagement was official. In March, Harlan joined the US Air Force.

Clara was united in marriage with Harlan at Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, TX, on July 2, 1954. Derek was born on Harlan's birthday, September 17, 1959. Brent Christopher was born on Christmas day, December 25, 1963. Bianca Yvonne was born Valentine's Day, February 14, 1968 in Albuquerque, NM, and was adopted into the family at the age of nine months. During Harlan's Air Force career, the family lived in Texas, Nebraska, New York, Mississippi, New Mexico, and the Philippine Islands. The family began tent camping in 1964 and used that for vacations and traveling to visit their parents and other relatives while in the Air Force. Harlan retired from the Air Force in 1970. The family moved to Lincoln, NE where Harlan attended the University of Nebraska. He graduated in December 1972 with a degree in elementary and special education. The family finally settled in Harlan to be near Clara's mother and to enjoy the small town life for their family. Harlan taught middle school special education for 17 years and retired in 1989. Clara worked for several years as a secretary in Houston, TX before Derek was born. She then enjoyed a teaching career, but as a volunteer. Using structured phonics, Clara taught their children to read and then did reading tutoring for children and adults for 30 years. She also taught Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and 7th grade confirmation class. The entire family was baptized and confirmed into the Lutheran faith. In 1994 Clara and Harlan began volunteering at the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn. Harlan greeted museum guests and demonstrated woodcarving. Clara took a course in genealogy there and also worked in the family history center. Clara renewed the Danish language with some classes and also enjoyed the challenge of translating old Danish letters and documents. Clara thanked God for the blessing of a caring and loving family. Clara died Wednesday, April 16, 2014 at her home in Harlan. She was 80 years, 3 months and 26 days of age.

Clara is preceded in death by her husband Harlan on November 12, 2009; her parents and sister Ethel (George) White. She is survived by her three children: Derek (Laura) Simonds of Wahoo, NE; Brent Simonds of Charlotte, NC; Bianca Simonds of Columbia, LA; seven grandchildren: Zachary and Hannah Simonds, Christopher, Sydney, Phillip and Tanah Simonds and Ralph Shelby Richard; sister Martha (Robert) McCord of Harlan; brother Morris Pedersen of Manhattan Beach, CA; sisters-in-law: Iva May of Richmond, CA; Betty Winkler of Nebraska City, NE; Carole Rowe of Rockville, IN and Janis (Frank) Crouner of Nebraska City, NE; brothers-in-law: Roland Simonds of Bay Shore, NY; Roy (Marty) Simonds of Enterprise, KS; Rex (Rebecca) Simonds of Rancho Cordova, CA; Harry (Dee) Simonds of El Paso, TX; and Jerry Simonds of Rockville, IN; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Visitation was held Friday, May 2, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Harlan. Funeral services were held Friday, May 2, 2014, 11:00 a.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Harlan with Pastor Janet Miller officiating. Hymns were "Our Father Has Light In His Window" and "Just As I Am, Without One Plea". Honorary casket bearers were her grandchildren, Christopher Simonds, Sydney Simonds, Phillip Simonds, Tanah Simonds, Zachary Simonds, Hannah Simonds, and Ralph Shelby Richard. Interment was held Saturday, April 19, 2014, at the Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery, Kimballton.

*Ohde  
Funeral  
Home*

(712) 655-3416  
www.ohdefuneralhome.com  
P O Box 247, Manning  
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