

Beulah Mae Witherspoon



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April 2, 1926 ~ April 2, 2011

Bea Witherspoon was born on April 2 1926, in Twin Falls, ID to Mae Winston and Homer Armour. The family of six moved several times between Broken Bow, Nebraska and Idaho before finally settling for good in Twin Falls. Bea Armour attended Twin Falls schools and was working as a waitress in a Twin Falls caf? when Jack Witherspoon walked in the door, fresh out of the Navy and looking for a pretty girl. He found her in Bea. Petite, long brown hair, a shy smile, Jack never had a chance. They were married March 12, 1946.

She always said she was so proud and lucky he'd chosen her because he was so darned handsome and sure of himself. They were both pretty lucky, because they made a great life together. Jack and Bea made their home in Twin Falls.

Jack started a little motor rewind shop while Bea started two babies. They moved to Southern California briefly in the fifties until Jack was notified he'd won a desert land entry, a government program providing undeveloped ground for free if you lived on it and cultivated it.

So Bea and Jack moved from sweet, sunny Garden Grove to build a house and a farm in desolate, cold, windswept, isolated Paul, Idaho. Bea cried herself to sleep for a while, thinking about the little house in California and orange orchards and the little MG roadster she'd left behind. After a few years, the acreage was cultivated, the house was built, and they moved back to Twin Falls. Jack started Electrical Equipment Company and Bea started baby #3.

They worked hard, building the business and building security for their family. Bea worked at home, riding herd on three headstrong kids, and making sure Jack had dinner waiting for him as soon as he got home.

When Jack retired, they bought a five-acre parcel of ground in a little town named Aguila, not much more than a wide spot on the old Arizona highway to LA and surrounded by cotton and cantaloupe fields.

The parcel was part of an intended airpark, with their neighbors having two significant commonalities—they were all about the same age, and all had their own small plane. So instead of a garage, each home had an airplane hangar. Instead of a driveway, they had an access lane to their own private airstrip.

Bea loved her many friends in Aguila during the more than twenty years they lived there. She worked beside Jack as he and all the first few couples finished the airpark, paving the airstrip, drilling water wells, helping each other make the place their home. She also got pretty accomplished at disposing of rattlesnakes that got too close to the house.

There was a lot of time to rotate the inventory down at the local watering hole, Jim's Place, where they would all meet on Friday night and let everyone know how the world should be run. Bea enjoyed welcoming every new couple to "The Roost" as the place grew, wanting to be sure everyone could meet the newcomers, wanting them to feel at home.

Some wives weren't so sure about this place out in the middle of the desert and Bea was mother hen to them, gave them warmth and a sympathetic ear until Aguila began to feel like home to them, too. She loved her friendships with just about anyone she encountered in Arizona, and they ranged from the desert dweller who lived off the grid to the retired NASA engineer. It always made us smile when they would take a moment to say, "I just love your mom." We heard that a lot, and it warmed our hearts.

She stayed amongst her friends in Arizona for a few years after Jack's death in 2000, but moved back to Idaho in 2004 to be closer to her children and grandchildren. She treasured the new friends she made in her new home, especially the opportunities to deploy her considerable skill at Penochle.

She enjoyed many chaotic holiday dinners with her family, and loved choosing which restaurant we'd visit for Sunday breakfast, and the sunny days when we'd get in her van and just drive around Boise neighborhoods to look at pretty yards.

Always an independent pragmatist, she made the difficult decision to surrender her driver's license on her own—she didn't want to leave that for her family to decide.

She spent a lot of time with her family, even after her health began to fail. After a long illness, she died at home on her birthday, April 2, with her family at her side. Her family loved her sweet smile, her unlimited love, her indestructible belief in the perfection of her grandkids, and the determination, strength, fortitude and grace she showed while overcoming many challenges to her health in the last few years. We will always and forever miss you, Mama.

She is survived by her son Aaron (Janet) Witherspoon, daughter Teresa (Mike) Long, and daughter Robyn (Randall) Williams, six grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and her very best friend, Rita Conner.

She was preceded in death by her husband Jack, two sisters and one brother. A memorial gathering will be held in May, in Aguila, Arizona, and where she will be with Jack once again. Cremation arrangements were under the direction of Cremation Society of Idaho