

Lavera Waas Young

October 8, 1926 – October 31, 2020

Lavera Waas Young was born on October 8, 1926 to Benaiah and Gladys Waas in Roseland, Nebraska. As the daughter of a Preacher, Lavera and her 3 siblings grew up learning about the Lord and how to peacefully live out her faith in their community. Growing a family of 6 in a Preacher's home offered little luxuries and Lavera learned early that lavishness was foolishness. Family vacations usually consisted of camping trips, visits to cousins and the occasional trip to the Grand Canyon which was a favorite for viewing the sunrise together. Lavera, along with her older brothers Orlin and Darrell, and younger sister Adavern served in



Sunday school and sang in the church choir. They trotted behind their father on numerous trails and hills trying to keep up with the quick stepping hiker. As a young girl, Lavera was known to accompany her father while he attended McPherson College and was complimented as his smart little well-behaved sidekick. Nor was it a surprise when she would quietly meander to the pulpit and stand next to her daddy while he was giving the Sunday sermon.

Lavera's childhood consisted of several moves as her family was called to different parishes in the Midwest. However, the most significant relocation brought the Waas family to Glendale Arizona in 1937. Glendale was where Lavera soaked up the sunshine and unleashed her athleticism. You could find her playing shortstop for the local softball team or smashing backhand returns on the tennis court. She was a high school champion in basketball, volleyball, and badminton. She played the piano a little, as many young Christian girls did at the time, but preferred feisty competition on any court or field over the piano keys.

When Lavera graduated high school, God led her into nurses training in Tempe, AZ. Only the Lord would know how needed her medical training would be in her future and He thought she should be well prepared. On break from school, while home visiting her parents who had moved to Dewey, AZ, she happened upon a handsomely dirty farmer operating a shovel in the neighboring field. Lavera "may" have kept an intentional eye on this young man (against the wishes of her older brothers) throughout their childhood and "possibly" took a detour that day walking in the fields. It was this "chance" encounter that solidified her future as Mrs. Elmer Young.....and, for those that knew Elmer, you understand why God prepared Lavera with medical training. Elmer Young and Lavera Waas were married on October 20, 1946.

Lavera had several occupations as a young adult, but her role as wife to Elmer and mother to 5 children were most precious to her. On their farm in Dewey, Lavera helped Elmer raise 5 children along with acres of pinto beans, field corn for silage, alfalfa hay, 250 farrowing hogs,

cattle, pumpkins and endless rows of sweet corn. She could make pies, pot roasts and jams while grinding pork and beef, collecting and selling eggs, gardening and sewing clothes for the children. Lavera would treat the kids and Elmer to milkshakes in the hay field, scrub them all for church on Sunday and smack a disobedient rear end if necessary. She encouraged her children in their interests and shuttled them to music lessons, 4H meetings, rodeo competitions or basketball and softball games. Her nurses' training was utilized while working as a Nurse's Assistant in the hospital and then for Dr. Florence Yount as a nurse and receptionist in Prescott, AZ but proved vital on the family farm for multiple broken bones, horse accidents, burns, cuts, bruises and concussions, (typical farm life). Recognizing shock, however, was her specialty and life saving in 1980 when Elmer's hand became tangled in a combine gear. Lavera stabilized his wound, hauled him to the hospital and nursed his hand after he lost 3 fingers and needed multiple surgeries.

Lavera was blessed with 12 grandchildren whom she cherished, helped care for and insist they learn correct grammar. "Anita and I" was a constant correction in my life. She enjoyed teaching the community children about the work Elmer did on the farm and guided 4-H clubs on the first of many Young's Farm tours. Grandma Lavera would make special hot cakes for any breakfast visitors, let us play hide and seek in her farm house, take naps on the davenport, and host Easter egg hunts, Christmas parties and New Year's celebrations. She would have special sleepovers for her grandkids that included simple manicures for the girls, old western movies for the boys, board games and always a chore or two. Sleeping in wasn't an option at Grandma's house, nor was rude behavior, laziness or incorrect grammar (did I mention that already?) but you always felt loved when you spent time with her.

Lavera was no stranger to heartbreak and learned resilience at a young age. Her older brother Darrell died in World War 2 at the age of 20. She said goodbye to her 3 month old grandson gone too soon. Lavera cared for her mother in law and her own parents in their elderly years and cried as God took them home. However, one of the most difficult things a mother could endure is laying her own child to rest. In 1999 Lavera helped care for her youngest daughter, Mary Lynn, as she battled and was eventually overtaken by cancer. Every Sunday morning for the rest of her life, Lavera listened to a CD of Mary Lynn's beautiful voice singing some of her favorite songs.

After 54 years on the farm in Dewey, including a 2 year "adventure" supporting Elmer's dream to be a cattle rancher on the desert Mexico border town of Mt Riley, New Mexico, Elmer and Lavera moved to Cortez, Colorado where they lived on a small ranch near friends. Lavera was happy if Elmer was happy and Elmer was happy when he had some green grass and a few cows. After 5 years in Colorado, they joined family on the ranch in Central Oregon where Elmer lived the last decade of his life watching baby calves play and hay grow. Lavera watched Elmer and tried to keep him out of trouble.

Great Grandma Lavera was able to meet almost all of her 28 great grandchildren and loved rocking them in the chair, reading books together, giving big hugs and just hearing about their activities. She always had an oatmeal raisin cookie and a glass of milk for hungry snackers or

cowboys who forgot to pack a lunch. After Elmer died she moved to Brookdale East Care Home in Tucson, AZ to be back in warmer weather and closer to her sister Adavern and daughter Susan. This location offered more opportunities for children and grandchildren to visit and she cherished the special alone time she had with each one. She even had a great great granddaughter to brag about.

In March of 2020 Brookdale closed its doors to visitors to protect residents from COVID-19. Thankfully, Grandma Lavera was sharp enough to use FaceTime and though most of her family only saw the front side of her thumb in the camera, she was able to see smiling faces and hear stories of grandkids and great grandkids. She loved to talk with them about their sports teams and 4H animals or their schooling and church lessons. She maintained an incredible mental awareness and somehow... never missed a chance to correct your grammar. You could always expect a tennis match or softball game on the T.V. in the background.

Grandma Lavera's lifetime of resilience was a blessing from God as she endured until October of 2020 when visitors were finally allowed on a limited basis. She was able to spend time with family, sing songs, look at pictures and visit while she had the energy during her last month. Lavera Waas Young went to be with Jesus on Friday October 31, 2020. She was 94 years, and forever, "Young".

Lavera is survived by her sister Adavern (Charles) Pullen, her children Stanley (Jennie) Young, Susan (Wilfred) Lackey, Gary Dan (Jeannine) Young, Denis (Stacy) Young and her 12 grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren and many more greats to come. She is preceded in death by her husband Elmer Young, her brother Darrell Waas, her parents Benaiah and Gladys Waas, her grandson Brian Young, her daughter Mary Lynn (Bill) Wallace, and her oldest brother Orlin (Virginia) Waas.

The Young and Waas family hope to gather for a family reunion in Montana in July of 2021. A tribute to Lavera will be held at this time. Lavera's ashes will be spread next to her beloveds on Elmer's Butte in Paulina, Oregon.

