

Westbrook

Society Presents



Jesse Ehrhart

Jessie was born to Charley and Maud Webb in October of 1928. She was raised in Gashland, MO, which has since been incorporated into Kansas City North. Jessie was the middle child of three girls. She grew up loving to read, play house and dreamed of being a secretary, because it seemed so romantic. She helped keep house, took care of the chickens, and helped her mother with the canning. Her mom also made their own butter and cottage cheese. She loved History and English in school and graduated from North Kansas City High School in 1947. Jessie was a faithful member of Gashland Methodist Church, attending church and Sunday School regularly.

Jessie met James "Jack" Ehrhart in 1947. He was the nephew of her neighbor. He served in Germany during WWII and received two Bronze Stars. He lived in Ohio but came to Kansas City looking for work. He had a motorcycle and took Jessie for a ride. She wasn't much of a biker, so before they were married, he sold the Harley and bought a car. She got her engagement ring around Thanksgiving and they married April 30, 1948.

Jessie went to work as a stenographer for H.E. Webster Lumber Co. She eventually realized her dream and became a secretary. She worked there for three years, then Jack and Jessie moved to Kansas for a year. They moved back to Kansas City and she went back to work for the lumber company for another seven years. Jack went to work as a toll collector on the Paseo Bridge. He worked there for the 18 years that it was a toll bridge.

From 1959 until 1963, Jessie was a part-time secretary for her church. In 1964, she started working as Charles McGill's secretary at the Jenkins Music Company. He moved to Western Auto and Jessie soon joined him. In 1974, Charles took a job as Treasurer at Unity School of Christianity. Once again, Jessie was asked to move with him. Before she retired in 1993, she was Assistant Corporate secretary, a position that had to be voted on by the Board. When she retired, so did Charles McGill. She had been secretary to him for over 25 years.

Besides working full-time as a secretary, Jessie also helped Jack realize his dream. In 1972, they opened JJ Campground on 15 acres in Holt, MO. They lived above the office, laundry and restrooms. Jack ran the campground and Jessie would work her secretarial job. At night she would come home, change into her jeans, help clean the women's bathrooms and the laundry room. They sold it in 1992, but Jessie stayed on for a year to help the transition.

In 1996, Jack and Jessie moved to three acres in Kearney, MO. Jack started having memory issues and was eventually diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Jessie took care of him at their home. He always knew Jessie. Jack passed away from complications with the Alzheimer's in 2005. They had been married for 57 years, a fact that makes her feel proud and grateful. Jessie said that without her religious faith however she would not have made it through the past 15 years.

Jessie still loves to read, especially the best sellers. She also loves her antiques and auctions. She collects many things including tin and wooden primitives, milk glass, Cosmos milk glass, sewing notions, tea diffusers, Royal Bayreuth - the tomato pattern, and Toby jugs from England. She is most proud of her mother's walnut cabinet that is 100 -150 years old. Supposedly her mother traded the old family piano for the walnut cabinet. She loves all kinds of dishes and cut glass. Jessie also follows tennis and is a member of Kearney United Methodist Church.

Jessie moved to Westbrook in May from her home here in town. She had tried to sell it last year but was unable to, so this year, she had an auction. Once that was done, she settled into her apartment at Westbrook. She loves the location of her apartment. It's close to the exits, the laundry room, dining room and has a beautiful view. She also likes the people. She says that she is a people person and makes friends easily.

Jessie reads a couple of devotion books each day. She says that she has read many quotes that she can use in her daily life. Such as: The way to be content in every circumstance of life is to rely on God and the strength God provides. Jessie says she is incredibly thankful for all the blessings of her life especially her family and friends. God has been good.



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