

Westbrook

Featured Resident

Irma Pendergast



Irma was born in Birmingham, MO, to Cecil and Mary Creek. She and her brother grew up on a farm in the Liberty area. They attended Providence School, which was a two mile walk from the farm. Irma didn't really like school. She enjoyed doing crafts and crocheting. Her dad was a musician and she remembers lots of square dancing. Irma graduated from Liberty High School in 1944.

After graduation, she went to work for Southwestern Bell in Liberty as a switchboard operator. It was during World War II and food was rationed. It was while standing in a ration line for bread at the grocery store that Irma met a young man named Robert Pendergrast. After seeing each other several times at the grocery store, Robert asked Irma out. They started dating and were married in 1946.

The young couple rented an apartment in Liberty. He worked for Falls Springs in North Kansas City. Irma continued to work for Southwestern Bell until they moved from Liberty to Antioch Road. She worked in a factory that made casket liners for fallen soldiers for a while and then went to work for Border's Dry Cleaning.

In 1949, the couple bought a 60 acre farm a few miles northwest of Liberty. They sold the original home and 20 acres of land off and gave 10 acres to a man who built them a home on the remaining 30 acres. They did not actively farm. They did however buy cattle, fatten them up and sell them off. They would run about 20 head at most.

Robert and Irma never had children. She worked for 44 years before retiring from WalMart in Liberty in 1988. Robert worked many years for various golf courses as a groundskeeper before he retired.

The couple traveled quite a bit; driving places when they were younger and doing bus tours as they got older. They attended the Tulip Festival in Pella, IA, and the rodeo in Cheyenne, WY. They were actively involved in Providence Baptist Church, the church Irma grew up attending. She became a member as a teenager and is still an active member 72 years later. Her current Sunday School teacher picks her up so she can still attend services.

Irma's love of crafts as a child grew as she did. She has made so many items over the years. She sewed her own clothes and made shirts for her husband. In her room, she has a pair of lawn chairs that she macraméd, several items of plastic canvas including a name plate that hangs outside her door and a KC Chiefs tissue box cover, and her pride is the quilt on her bed. She drew each butterfly by hand and cut them out before sewing them onto the quilt. She even made leather wallets.

Robert became ill with heart disease and was in a nursing home for a couple of years before passing away with a heart attack in 1992.

Irma continued to live on the farm after Robert's passing but did not run cattle anymore. She did mow the hay and kept up with clearing all the brush. She loved looking out her windows and seeing the deer and wild turkey. However, she has macular degeneration in both eyes and it became harder for her to do things. She could not see well enough to drive anymore. She decided while she could still see some, it was time for a change. So she made the decision to sell the farm and the house she had lived in for 45 years.

Irma's mother had lived at Westbrook in the 1990's and Irma liked the place. Her friend, Mary Warren, had recently moved to Westbrook. So, Irma decided to move here as well. She likes the fact that she doesn't have to pay all the bills. No more gas bill, water bill, cable and so on. It's all included in just one price and she doesn't have to worry about scooping snow or mowing the grass anymore either.

Irma's brother lives in Liberty. Besides her brother, she has a nephew, his wife and two children that live in Colorado. She is very close with them and they were just here to visit her. She says it's hard to see them go.

The owners of Westbrook Care Center really genuinely care about what they are doing and the people living here. It is a good and safe place. ~ Cathy S

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