

Carol Irene Denke (nee Branum), daughter of Leonard and Winnie Branum, was born on a farm in Belle Fourche, South Dakota on September 25, 1922. She was the youngest of eight children. Carol would often tell the story of how her mother was surprised by the doctor during delivery that she was having not just one baby, but two. Her twin sister Cora, along with their other siblings, Roland, Arnie, Kenneth, Buster, Amy, and Marion had a simple and cherished childhood on a sugar beet farm with no electricity, or running water, where their family also raised chickens, and had horses. She would often say her fondest childhood memories were on the farm, playing outside with her siblings (especially her twin sister Cora), and inspired her lifelong love of horses.

After high school, Carol went to visit her sister Amy and brother-in-law Howard in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. At the army base nearby, there was a dance, and the first soldier that asked her to dance was Rudolf Denke, from Brooklyn New York. After a short courtship they were united in marriage in Clovis, New Mexico in 1943. A few months later, Rudy was deployed to Italy to serve in World War II. His plane was shot down and he became a prisoner of war in Germany. Rudy came home after the war 1 1/2 years later, and met his son, Rudolf Conrad II, for the first time. Rudy and Carol had 2 more children, Dennis Warren, and Marsha Elaine.

The Denkes moved to Patterson New Jersey where Carol was baptized and confirmed at St Paul Lutheran Church as an adult. The family moved several more times before Rudy and Carol moved to San Antonio Texas and managed a campground. The couple then retired to Alexandria, Minnesota to be close to family.

Carol was a dedicated wife, mother and homemaker. She had a spirit of adventure and loved to travel, especially with Rudy, her husband of 66 wonderful years until his death in 2009. Her love of adventure led her to sit on a brahma bull, go up in a hot air balloon, and at 91 years old, she fulfilled a lifelong dream of jumping out of an airplane, inspired by her husband Rudy.

Carol died on March 8, 2023 at Bethany Nursing Home in Alexandria, Minnesota. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Rudy, seven siblings, and a granddaughter. She is survived by two sons: Rudy & wife, Pat of Alexandria, Dennis & wife Cheryl of Wenatchee, WA, and daughter Marsha of Lisle, IL, ten grandchildren, twenty-five great-grandchildren, and seven great-great-grandchildren.

In Loving
M E M O R Y



Carol I. Denke

1922 ~ 2023

The Day God Called You Home

*God looked around His garden
and found an empty space.*

*Then He looked down upon the earth
and saw your tired face.*

*He put his arms around you,
lifted you to rest.*

*God's garden must be beautiful,
for He only takes the best.*

*He knew that you were suffering.
He knew you were in pain.*

*He saw the road was getting rough,
and the hills were hard to climb.
So He closed your weary eyes,
and whispered, "Peace be thine".*

*It broke our hearts to lose you,
but you did not go alone.*

*For part of us went with you,
the day God called you home.*

In Loving
M E M O R Y

Carol Irene Denke

September 25, 1922 † March 8, 2023

Memorial Service

Anderson Funeral Home
Alexandria, Minnesota
Wednesday, March 15, 2023
11:00 AM

Officiant

Reverend Jesse Carson

Music

"On Eagles Wings"
"How Great Thou Art"
"The Lords Prayer"
"Amazing Grace"

Eastern Star Service

11:45 AM

Interment

Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery
Camp Ripley, Minnesota