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**Bettye Geraldine White**

On Saturday, April 12, 2014, at 3 p.m., Bettye Geraldine White passed from our presence after 91 years.

Bettye was born to Giles Wesley White and Fannie Lois Graves on March 16, 1923, in Abilene, Texas. She attended school in Tuscola, Texas, before finishing her education at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene.

Bettye married Charles Alford McNeil on June 28, 1946, in Delta, Colo. They had three children together, born in various places across Colorado and Montana, before they finally settled in Wibaux, Mont.

Bettye worked as Wibaux Clerk and Recorder before taking a longer-term position as the school secretary for Wibaux, from '58-'69. After the children graduated, the family moved to Bozeman in '70.

Separating from her husband, she began a new career as co-owner/operator of Forest Park Trailer Court with her brother, Wes, on the Gallatin River near Four Corners. She worked tirelessly to maintain this family-centered space, often on her mower, cutting grass and picking up cottonwood tree debris. In the winter she cross-country skied.

In '83, the trailer court sold, and she built her final home on 60 acres on East Baxter Lane. From there she explored the world while raising cows, sheep and the odd grandchild. She cut and stacked hay, fed and worked hard for years to show a Grand Champion Targhee Ram at the Bozeman Winter Fair.

Bettye had a great love of western life. Her love of horses was a consuming passion, and she was never without one and a dog for company, riding every day during the spring, summer and fall, up until her last few months.

She began performing with horses early, and continued with rodeos and roping, and after settling in Bozeman never missed the CNFR or Spring Rodeo. Members of the Back Country Horsemen of Montana will remember her presence at poker rides, parades and group rides across southwest Montana. She was their president for many years in the '90s and '00s, and was active for over 30 years with those who shared her joy for the outdoors and horses.

Bettye was a lifelong believer in Christ, always present on Sundays at one of series of churches that she attended over the course of her 44 years in the Gallatin Valley.

She believed in fitness (mostly for horses and dogs) and hard work. In her final years she was cared for by her children, living at her home, with much care from her devoted daughter-in-law, Mikela.

She is survived by her brother, Wesley White (Bonnie); and children, Steven McNeil (Mikela), Carla McCormick (Jerry) and Bettye Knight. There are also seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Bettye will be missed -- her calm, loving demeanor enriched the lives of many, who will always remember her.

Memorial Services will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday, April 17, at Belgrade Alliance Church.

Donations in Bettye's name may be made to Highgate Senior Living, 2219 W. Oak, Bozeman, MT 59718; Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen, P.O. Box 3232, Bozeman, MT 59772; Belgrade Alliance Church, 205 W. Cameron Ave., Belgrade, MT 59714; or to the [charity of your choice](#).

Arrangements are in the care of Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service. [www.dokkennelson.com](http://www.dokkennelson.com).

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