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Eula Mai Neal Gannon Birkey

Oct. 7, 1924 - Feb. 8, 2006

GALVESTON — Eula Mai Neal Gannon Birkey, 81, born Oct. 7, 1924, in McMinnville, Tenn., was a daughter of Henry Lee and Cyntha Elizabeth (Davenport) Neal. Eula Married Middleton Smoot Gannon on Aug. 15, 1943. He died March 29, 1984. She then married Lowell Birkey Aug. 10, 1985. He died Jan. 3, 1998.

Eula is also preceded in death by her parents; one brother, Huston Neal of North Vernon; two half-brothers, Charlie Neal of McMinnville, Tenn., and Shine Neal of Indianapolis. Two daughters and one son died in infancy.

Eula is survived by four daughters, Mary Key, Monterey, Tenn., Rosa Gannon, Kokomo, Naomi and husband Dan Vandiver, Sharpsville, Rebecca and husband Steve Bechtel, Indianapolis; one granddaughter, Tammy and husband Mark Brooks, Kokomo; three great-granddaughters, Shelby and Sierra Carpenter, and Cheyanne Brooks, all of Kokomo; one brother, Carl Neal, North Vernon; a host of nieces and nephews; three stepdaughters and three stepsons, Merle and wife Becky Birkey, Wayne and wife Shirley Birkey, Roselyn Beachy, Retha and husband Dan Martin, Lavon and wife Tammy Birkey, Geneva and husband Ron Niccum; several stepgrandchildren and step great-grandchildren; and a close family friend, Doris Phipps, Monterey, Tenn.

Eula was a member of Mount Zion Free Methodist Church near Galveston where she attended until 1985. After she married Lowell Birkey she attended Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, where Lowell was a member.

Eula came to Indiana with her husband, Smoot, and her eldest daughter, Mary, in 1944. She lived out the rest of her life in Miami County and later in Howard County.

She was a homemaker until her youngest daughter was eight years old, occasionally taking a job outside of the home to help make ends meet for her family.

She loved growing and tending to her flowers and vegetable garden, canning the rewards of her labor for her family, and always kept a neat and clean home. She was a great southern-style cook.

She worked 21 years as a nurses aide, first at Windsor Estates Nursing Home, then at Forest Park Health Care Center. She later returned to Windsor Estates where she retired in August 1985.

She was a strong woman. She bore seven children; and buried three children and two husbands. She worked long hours between her job as a nurses aide and her job as a mother and wife, taking care of her home and family.

She managed her disease of diabetes for 35 years until she had a couple of mild strokes which left her unable to care for herself as she had done all those years. On March 29, 2004, she went to reside at Windsor Estates Nursing Home until December 2005, when she had her right leg amputated due to diabetes.

She was moved to Manor Care after a brief stay at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Hospital. On Feb. 1, 2006, she had her left leg amputated as well, followed by a second stay at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Hospital where she again received excellent care until her passing on Feb. 8, 2006, at 7:55 a.m.

The family of Eula Birkey wishes to thank the staff of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Hospital for their care, as well as the many faithful visitors of family and friends from Mount Zion Free Methodist Church and the Howard-Miami Mennonite Church. Thanks for all the prayers, cards and visits these last two years during mother's time of need. You helped brighten her last days on this earth

Funeral services are 1 p.m. Saturday at the Murray-Weaver Funeral Home, Galveston Chapel, 401 S. California St., with Pastors Lee Miller and Randy Detweiler officiating. Burial will follow at the Galveston Cemetery. Calling hours are 4 to 8 p.m. today at the funeral home. Memorial Contributions may be made to Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, 3976 E. 1400 S., Kokomo, IN.

Source: Kokomo Tribune

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