

Obituary for Dorothy M. Counts

Dorothy Marie Pagliasotti was born on April 12, 1926 in Dawson, New Mexico. She was the fourth child born to her parents, John Thomas Pagliasotti and Constance Marie (Tina) Menapace Pagliasotti. Their first baby, Annie, died during the Spanish Flu pandemic. They had four more children, three born in Dawson, George, James, and Dorothy, and their last, Robert, born in Denver.

In Denver, Dorothy attended West High School and graduated in 1944. She soon met Robert Counts with whom she was married for 53 years until his death. They had two children, Jerry and Donna, and two grandchildren. Eventually five great-grandchildren and one great-great-granddaughter joined the family. Dorothy was a wonderful daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, aunt, cousin, and friend.

Dorothy loved listening to music, dancing, watching the Rockies and Broncos, gardening, and collecting kewpie dolls, depression glass, and crystal cut dishes. More than anything, she loved to visit with friends and family. One of her best friends was her cousin, Margaret Maschio. They were more like sisters than cousins.

Not long after her 94th birthday, Dorothy contracted the COVID-19 virus and died on the morning of May 14, 2020. She will be remembered with deep love and gratitude by friends and family.

Eulogy for Dorothy Marie Counts

by JoAnne Pagliasotti, May 20, 2020

Thanks to All Saints Parish for providing this funeral Mass as a service to our family, and to all who ventured out to pay their respects to a wonderful woman, Dorothy Counts. On behalf of her children, Jerry Counts and Donna Burdick, thank you, and welcome.

Dorothy Marie Pagliasotti was born on April 12, 1926 in Dawson, a coal-mining town in northern New Mexico. She was the fourth child born to her parents, John Thomas Pagliasotti and Tina Menapace Pagliasotti. Their first child, Annie Pagliasotti, had died as a baby during the Spanish Flu pandemic a little more than 100 years ago. Then were born George, James, and Dorothy. Another son, Robert, was born after the family moved to Denver. Dorothy attended West High, graduated in 1944, and soon met Robert Counts. They were married for 53 years, had two children, two grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and one great-great-granddaughter. Dorothy worked for many years at the May D&F store downtown as a gift wrapper. She loved watching Lawrence Welk, the Colorado Rockies, and the Denver Broncos. She loved her family. She was a wonderful daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, aunt, cousin, friend, and sister-in-law to my mom, to Aunt Alice, and to Aunt Ruth.

My cousin Donna called me on the morning of May 14 to tell me that her mom had died. She asked that I let people know since I have connections to many in the family through Facebook, so I did post an announcement and, later, information about the funeral. I have been amazed that at last count 116 people have reacted and others have left 93 comments. So many people loved Aunt Dorothy and several told of memories and stories that I would like to share with you.

Two of Dorothy's brother George's kids told me of funny stories they remembered about their Aunt Dorothy. Dan said that once Dorothy's husband Bob had played a trick on Dan's mom, Alice, by tossing a pie in her face. Alice schemed for a while to get him back and finally enlisted Dorothy's help to corner him and Alice managed to land a pie right back in Bob's face. Dan's sister Susan remembered going with her mom, Alice, to take Aunt Dorothy out to lunch. Alice squeezed into the back seat of Susan's new little car and then couldn't get out. She said they all laughed and laughed. Susan added that she knew Aunt Dorothy would want us to remember the fun times so she could laugh in spirit with us again.

My brother Jim said he'll never forget Aunt Dorothy's pickles, the best in the world! He said a friend of his, a food connoisseur, said they were the tastiest pickles ever. My sister Janice said that Aunt Dot got her a job at the May D&F, working next to her wrapping gifts. That job enabled Janice to pay for her college. My sisters Teri and Tina remembered special things such as Dorothy's collections of Kewpie dolls and figurines, Depression glass and crystal ware, doilies, cloth covers for kitchen appliances, beautiful clematis, peonies, and grape vines in her garden, weekly phone calls to our mom to catch up, "Whatcha doin'?", and an expression she occasionally used, in a voice that we all remember, "Oh my Gawd!" That was quintessential Aunt Dorothy. My brother Michael remembers sending her a letter thanking her for getting him a signed picture of the Broncos, but he misspelled the salutation, "Dear Anut Dorothy," and said that she got the biggest kick out of that and saved that letter for a long time. I started spending more time with her after my mom died. Mom used to go pick up Aunt Dorothy to take her out to lunch because Dorothy didn't drive, and after Mom died, I found I wanted to carry on that tradition. I used to take her frequently to Papa Mazzotti's Italian Restaurant. There was usually

a karaoke singer there, Mike DeCesare, who would sing old songs in the style of Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. Aunt Dorothy always had the same five requests and wouldn't send me to tip the singer until he had sung all five: *That's Amore*, *New York New York*, *Return to Me*, *Spanish Eyes*, and one more that I can't remember now. No tip for me!

Dorothy's younger brother Bob in his later years developed Parkinson's Disease and moved out of his house into an assisted living residence nearer to me. Several times, I took him to visit her. They loved each other very much. I remember once, in his early 80's, Uncle Bob leaned over toward her and asked her, "Do you still call me your baby brother?" She immediately answered, "Well, of course!" When Uncle Bob died, Donna didn't want to tell Aunt Dorothy because she thought it would upset her too much, but within a few days after he died, Aunt Dorothy told Donna that Uncle Bob had stopped by to see her. Donna found that very interesting. She imagines that by now, Aunt Dorothy has met up with Uncle Bob in Heaven and has asked him, "What are you doing here already?"

All in all, Dorothy was a special woman and I loved her very much. She was like a second mother to me. I've been somewhat surprised that her death has been harder for me even than when my parents died and, thinking about it, I believe there are a couple of reasons. One was just because of the way it happened. The last time I saw her, I told her that I'd be back the next week, and then the shutdown happened because of the pandemic and no one was allowed to visit in the nursing homes. She contracted the COVID-19 and was unable to see her loved ones in her last weeks of life. That is really hard to take! The other reason it's been so difficult is that she was the last of that generation in my family. My parents and all my aunts and uncles are gone now, the generation that worked so hard to provide for us, to feed us, to clothe us, to teach us, and to raise us to adulthood, the generation that showed us who were the people that we come from and why we honor the values of hard work, good humor, and love in the family. So, I thank you, Aunt Dorothy, for helping me know who I am. You will always be in my heart!