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Betty Irene Whitney

Feb 5, 2006

Sept. 21, 1922 — Feb. 1, 2006

MONTROSE — Betty Whitney died Feb. 1, 2006, at the Valley Manor Care Center as a result of injuries received in a car accident in November of 2005.

Betty Mullen was born in the little southeastern Colorado coal-mining town of Morley. Her cousin, Bill, used to tease her, to her constant aggravation, that she was “a coal miner’s daughter with slack in her pants.” She grew up in Morley and Trinidad, graduating from Trinidad High School and attending Trinidad Junior College before moving with her mother and father to the West Coast.

She worked as a design draftsman in a Portland, Ore. shipyard in 1942, moved back to California in 1943, working as an accountant for a GE plant in Ontario where her mother and father had settled. Her oldest brother Bob was serving in the Navy and next oldest and adored brother Jim was a pilot in the Philippines until the surrender of Bataan.

Betty met her future husband, Richard Whitney, while visiting the military hospitals in Southern California, searching for word of Jim’s fate. Betty and Dick were married five months later — they would have celebrated their 60th anniversary next month. For the first two years they lived in San Luis Obispo, Calif., while Dick attended Cal Polytechnic College, and Betty worked as a secretary at a local insurance agency. Jim was born in 1947. The family moved back to Chino and Dick worked with his father on the family dairy until he leased and operated a nearby dairy. Two more children were born during that period, Barbara in 1949, and Terri in 1954.

The family moved to Montrose in January of 1956. Baby Wendy came along in 1960. So, Betty had rounded out the new roles as dairy farmer’s wife, struggling through the first two frigid winters, and mother of a young family, driving the six miles from home to town many times daily, hauling kids back and forth to clubs, sports, and Saturday matinee movies.

She also took on many community roles: Treasurer and President of the Montrose County Republican Women's Club, Republican Precinct Committeewoman, 1200 Club member, PEO member, assistant Brownie leader, Christian Church member. She was active in P.T.C/P.T.A. for 17 years. Betty was also a lifelong, passionate, take-no-prisoners, do-not-call-me-during-the-game! Denver Broncos fan(atic).

Betty was the constant, the love, the patience, the kindness in our family's lives. She takes some of the light from our world as she leaves.

Betty was preceded in death by her parents, Robert and Nadine Mullen, brothers Bob and Jim (who died as a POW on a hell ship in Moji Harbor, Japan around Jan. 31-Feb. 1, 1945 — 61 years ago nearly to the day), and beloved granddaughter, Jenny. Survivors include husband Dick Whitney, of Montrose; children: Jim Whitney, of Minnetonka, Minn.; Barbara Whitney, of Reno, Nev.; Terri Waddell, of Maggie Valley, N.C.; Wendy O'Brien, of Durango; granddaughters: Erica Wilsey, Andrea Snyder, and Diana Snyder, of Reno; Melissa Waddell, of Maggie Valley; Meghan O'Brien, of Durango; and a grandson, Collyn O'Brien, of Durango. Also grieving her loss is her faithful friend and daily walking companion, Goldie, a Labrador retriever.

At her request, cremation has already taken place. Memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the Crippin Funeral Home Chapel.

The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions be made in Memory of Betty Whitney to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Colorado Chapter, 700 Broadway, Suite 808, Denver, CO 80230-3442.

Arrangements are being handled under the direction and care of the Crippin Funeral Home & Crematory, 802 E. Main, in Montrose, (970) 249-2121.

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