



Betty Roa

May 3, 1923 - December 27, 2020

Betty Roa of Fremont, CA passed away on December 27, 2020 following a stroke a few days earlier. Betty was born on May 3, 1923 in Harmony, MN to Harry and Selma Workman. After graduating from Harmony High School, she earned her teaching credential at Mankato State, which would mark the beginning of her long teaching career. In 1947 she took a trip to visit her sister, Doris, in California where she met her future husband Clarence "Bing" Roa. They were married in 1948. Daughter Debbi was born in 1952, and soon after, Betty returned to teaching in San Leandro. The family moved to Fremont in 1962, where Betty continued to teach until her retirement in 1986. In 2002 Betty decided she had done enough sitting and returned to the classroom to help Debbi with her first graders at Graham Elementary School in Newark. Every day she drove herself to school where she stayed for 2 or 3 hours reading with students, helping a small group with math, passing out hugs, wiping tears, applying bandages, and helping in any way she could. Because Debbi was also "Mrs. Roa," the kids decided to call her "Grandma."

The time she spent with them kept her happy and young. She finally had to retire again in 2018 after problems with mobility caused her to hang up the car keys. Former students continued to come by the classroom to ask about Grandma and pass on their love.

Betty was a voracious reader and often read 2 books a week. She loved writing letters to her family and friends and even learned to watch her Sunday church service on her iPad "all by herself." Her life was long and full and her family is grateful for the quality time they were able to

spend with her. In addition to her family and friends, we would like to send a special thank you to the staff of St. Therese Care Home, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Washington Hospital, her family at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, and especially all of her "Grahammies" who made her life so special.

Betty is survived by daughter, Debbi, son-in-law Don Bolce; grandchildren Cody, Gigi, and Shyamal; niece Ann Mraz, grandnephew Brad Thacher; and nieces on the Roa side. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her husband, Bing, her sisters Louise Yeoman and Doris Sampson, and brothers Ross and Roger Workman.

Due to COVID restrictions, there will not be services held at this time. If you knew Betty,

please share a favorite memory of her with someone you love. If you would like to make a contribution

in her honor, please consider donating a book to your local school or a child in need.

Comments



“ My memories of Betty began in 1962, my family moved to Fremont, in a new housing track, and lived one house away from Debbi, Betty and Bing. Debbi and I became close friends and her folks were the best. My life goes so far back when I think of it, and often in those thoughts I pause at what a true blessing, in my life, having them as neighbors was.

My dad died three years after moving to that neighborhood, the Roa's pulled me in a little closer and you don't forget people like Betty, and I must say Bing too, they were good and kind to me, my brother and mom. I could always talk to Betty and often visited her the years while raising my family and into my sixty's, somehow after a visit I always felt the same, like that was exactly what I needed, a visit with Betty. My love for maple furniture started with Betty's decorating, no doubt about it. Her Christmas letter this past Christmas, it especially tugged at my heart when received, little did I know why then, but she seemed at peace with how life had worked out. I am so glad she had a long life and her pride and joy, Debbi, was always near and the joy Deb's family brought to Betty made for a wonderful life. I miss Betty, it has been nearly 60 years that I knew she was in visiting distance, I feel her spirit with me now, as she was like a mom to me, Love you always, Sharon

Sharon Howard - February 02 at 06:19 PM



“ It was 1968 and I was a bit nervous. A foreign exchange student from Holland going to the US. It could not have been a happier year, with Betty, Bing and daughter Debbi Roa. Betty was a sweet foster mother and also strict in a positive way. She even helped rewriting, correcting and typing some projects I had to do in Washington Highschool ... it is a year I will always cherish, so much fun, so many happy memories. I visited again in the 70's with a girlfriend, again in the 80's with my husband and 2 year old son, then in the 90's with our teenage kids and recently, in 2017. She was in very good form, very acute and we laughed a lot together. Last year she still wrote me a beautifully handwritten letter. It was such a privilege to have Betty as a Mom, will never forget her, à Dieu Mom

Debora Cessford - January 24 at 04:14 PM



“ I had the privilege of knowing Mrs. Roa, through my friendship with her daughter, Debbi. Ironically, while teaching third grade at Oliveria Elementary School in Fremont, Mrs. Roa taught my younger sister, Jacque. Also while teaching kindergarten at Cabrillo Elementary School, she taught my Brother, Dana. She was an amazing person, who loved watching young children learn to love school. I'm so glad that I made the effort to have coffee with her, Debbi, as well as my mom and sister during my last visit to Fremont. At that time she was just as vibrant and active as I had remembered. After volunteering to help Debbi once in her classroom, I know how exhausting it can be working with first graders. I'm sure that Mrs. Roa (Grandma) has made a great impression on these children and helped them to become better people. I send my prayers to Debbi and her entire family and hope that they are able to have a service that will allow them the chance to celebrate her wonderful life.

With love,
Charlene Hillman

Charlene Hillman - January 22 at 06:42 PM



“ We enjoyed many good times with Betty and Bing over the years. She kept the church meetings and activities fun and interesting. We loved hearing her stories and about current activities she participated in. She will be missed by so many and always remembered as a very special lady. Our thoughts and prayers are with each of you.

Jan and Glenn Arney

Jan Arney - January 21 at 09:40 PM