



Emma Nelson Roberts

JAN 16, 1930 - JAN 25, 2017



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Emma Nelson Roberts, 87, of Spring Valley, California, died Wednesday, January 25, 2017. Emma was born to Cecil and Ruthie Nelson on January 16, 1930, in the town of Miller, a very rural part of Oklahoma. As a child, she helped her mom with the housework, tended the vegetable garden, harvested peanuts, and picked cotton. Emma and her family moved to La Mesa in 1943. She attended La Mesa Grammar School, Grossmont High School, and San Diego City College. Emma first met David Roberts, her future husband, at age thirteen when he walked across the street to show her his five-legged toad. They married in July 1950 and had two children, Lois and Steven. When her first great-grandchild was born, Emma was thrilled that the child was also named Emma. Professionally, Emma first held the position of church secretary as a young adult. Later on, when they needed to pay for their children's braces, she worked selling Avon products door-to-door and served in school cafeterias. These were ideal jobs as she would be home after school. When her children were grown, Emma returned to college to brush up on her secretarial skills in order to reenter the work force. She worked hard to advance her career and rose to the highest level position as an administrative assistant for the County of San Diego. Emma was always known as an organizer and tireless worker! Throughout her teenage years and adult life, she remained true to her faith and actively served in her church. She taught Sunday school, sang in the choir, sponsored the Fellowship Guild Girls, and ran the Ton of Food Drive for many years. She chaired the Missions Commission, the Janet Garcia Circle, and the OWLS Book Club. She served on two work teams to Chile and was an active member of the Seekers Adult Bible Study. At San Carlos United Methodist Church, she was selected for the Quiet Disciple Award and the Missions Award. In her spare time, she volunteered as a Camp Fire Girls leader, a Cub Scout leader, in the PTA, as a reading tutor for students at a local elementary school, and at the Alzheimer's Association office. Emma was brave to go



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on adventures with David that scared her! She agreed to go to Yosemite despite her fear of bears. She rode a mile-long zip line in Costa Rica. She put up with all the various snakes, rats, frogs, mice, newts, and guinea pigs that David brought home. She even tolerated having an alligator in the bathtub for a few days and understood when David had to ignore her for a few days while he focused on building a cage for a monkey. Emma loved all things chocolate, good grammar, trying innovative recipes, lilacs, the color blue, mystery books, and travel. Together, she and David travelled to thirty countries around the world. She was often freezing cold on these trips, and her grandson, Bob, referred to her as “Eskimo Emma” when they were in Israel. On a boat trip to Baja California, a baby whale flipped her in the chest with its flukes! Her favorite trip was a cruise through the Panama Canal. When Emma was diagnosed with Dementia with Lewy Bodies, she was brave enough to seek out information about her disease and turn it into something beneficial for others. She volunteered to participate in a long-range study at the Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center. Emma was a humble and kind person. She always valued and was satisfied with what she had. She lived a life of faith and service to others. In her own words, she said that her deepest values were “honesty and that each person should be the best person he or she can, using the talents given by God”. She believed that “each person is important”. Her wish for the future was “that people will treat one another with kindness and be tolerant of differences.” Good advice! Emma’s family is proud of what she accomplished in her life, both personally and professionally. She was truly a “superwoman”! Emma is survived by her husband of 66 1/2 years, David; her children, Lois Roberts DeKock of El Cajon, CA, and Steven Roberts (Linda) of Encinitas, CA; her grandson, Robert Luddy (Amanda) of Austin, TX; her great-grandchildren Emma, Caleb, and Danae Luddy; her brother, Earnest Nelson, of Escondido, CA; and her long-time friend, JoAnn Atkins, of Odenton, MD. The celebration of Emma’s life will be held: Saturday, February 11, 2017, 1:00 PM San Carlos United Methodist Church 6554 Cowles Mountain Boulevard San Diego, CA 92119 In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to Alzheimer’s San Diego (alzsd.org) and Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center (adrc.ucsd.edu/giving).



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Emma by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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