

Mary Elizabeth (Irigaray) Lawrence (1922-2019)

Mass of Christian Burial for Mary Elizabeth Irigaray Lawrence, 97-year-old lifetime Buffalo resident, who passed away peacefully on Friday Dec. 20, 2019 at the Amie Holt Care Center in Buffalo, will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 28 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church with Rev. Peter Johnson as celebrant. A vigil service and a sharing of memories will take place at the church at 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 27. Visitation will be held at the Harness Funeral Home Chapel from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Friday Dec. 27.

Mary Elizabeth Irigaray Lawrence was born on March 27, 1922 to Gaston Irigaray and Grace Iriart Irigaray, both first-generation Basque immigrants, in Buffalo. Mary attended elementary and secondary schooling in Buffalo and graduated from Johnson County High School in 1940. After high school, she continued her education at Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa for one year and then on to Barnes Business College in Denver where she graduated with a secretarial degree. Mary worked a short time in Denver then moved to Casper where she worked for a period for the Production Credit Association before returning home to help her parents in the sheep ranching business. Mary married Ray Lawrence on April 24, 1946 in Buffalo. Ray and Mary were in the plumbing, livestock and bar business all in Buffalo over many years.

Mary most enjoyed being a guiding light of holiness, strength and guidance as a mother to five children, grandmother to 14 grandchildren, great-grandmother to 27 great grandchildren and great-great-grandmother to one great-great grandchild. Her strength of character, clear mind and memories of the past and never ending love and care for family will be missed but will forever remain alive in the hearts and minds of her family in the memories of the precious time together with Amatchi (grandmother).

Mary was the oldest second-generation Basque resident in Johnson County at the time of her death and an honorary lifetime member of the Bighorn Basque Club. She was very proud of her Basque heritage and had the good fortune of visiting and getting acquainted and communicating with many of her Basque relatives numerous times in the Pyrenees Mountains of southern France. Mary enjoyed travelling and was fortunate to be able to travel to many, many places, including meeting President Gerald Ford, with her friend and travel companion Patricia Marton.

She is survived by her son Richard Lawrence and daughter-in-law Joan (Washut) of Commerce, Texas, son Dennis Lawrence and daughter-in-law Sharon of Buffalo, daughter Grace Moriarty and son-in-law Bill of Bullhead City, Arizona, daughter Margaret Paul and son-in-law James of Rapid City, South Dakota and son-in-law Robert (Butch) Pierson of Sheridan.

She was preceded in death by her husband Ray Lawrence and daughter Cecilia Lawrence Pierson, her parents and her brother Joseph and numerous brothers and sisters-in-law.

She was a lifetime member of St. John the Baptist Church, Council of Catholic Women, rosary guild and at various times participated and was a member of the Susie Bowling Lawrence Hospice, Johnson County Woolgrowers Auxiliary, Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum and was the first female bank board member in Buffalo at the then Wyoming Bank & Trust Company.

Donations in Mary's memory may be made to the St. John Catholic Church Foundation or Buffalo Senior Center in care of Harness Funeral Home at 351 N. Adams St., Buffalo, WY 82834.

