



Phyllis Elsbeth Black

March 6, 1921 - June 18, 2023

A graveside military service will be held at 1 p.m., Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at Valley View Cemetery in Torrington, Wyo., followed by a celebration of life at the Yoder Community Building.

Phyllis Elsbeth Hughes Black, Wyoming pioneer, American patriot, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, and friend, died on June 18, 2023, at age 102, in Cheyenne.

She was born the second of four children to Frank and Blanche (Smith) Hughes on March 6, 1921, on the family ranch on Horse Creek near Hagie in Goshen County, Wyo. Her parents and both sets of grandparents were homesteaders in Goshen Hole. Phyllis' job on the ranch was to herd the cows for evening milking, so she rode horseback every day, a chore she loved. Phyllis graduated from Yoder High School in 1938 and Scottsbluff Junior College in Nebraska in 1940. She moved to Abilene, Texas, and learned how to fly while working for her uncle, Jack Hughes, at his aviation school, earning a private pilot's license at 22. She was influenced by the young men who were training as pilots to serve their country in World War II.

She enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1944 and was assigned to the Naval Air Transport Service where she served as a yeoman and flight orderly at Moffett Field, Calif. She found her dream assignment as a member of flight crews aboard the Martin JRM Mars, huge propeller-powered seaplanes that transported Naval troops and cargo between San Francisco and Honolulu. She met her future husband, Grover "Bud" Black, on a blind date during a

layover on Oahu. She particularly enjoyed the fact he owned a red Buick Roadster convertible. The two were married on Aug. 12, 1947, at Alameda Naval Air Station in California. They would have four children.

Phyllis served in the U.S. Naval Reserve (“WAVES”) until 1948, achieving the rate of Aviation Storekeeper First Class (AK1). She was decorated with the Good Conduct Medal, the American Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

The GI bill allowed her to graduate from the University of Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education in 1953, also earning teaching certificates for elementary and junior high school. She earned a Master of Arts degree in Education from San Jose State College in 1957.

Bud’s naval career took the family to Tennessee, Florida, Oklahoma, California and New Jersey before he retired in 1958, with the family then moving to Cheyenne, Wyo., where Phyl worked for the soil conservation division in the state agriculture department. In 1965, the Blacks bought a dairy farm near Athens, Wis. There, Phyl was able to exercise her love of teaching at an elementary school in nearby Colby.

The Blacks moved to a farm northwest of Huntley, Wyo., in 1972, before purchasing Silver Tip Corner near Yoder in 1974, where Bud operated a used truck business. Phyllis began a new career as a U.S. Postal Service carrier, traveling 94 miles a day in all types of weather six days a week for 20 years, retiring in 1994. She was named an Outstanding Carrier by the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association in 1988 for unusual and outstanding service. She joined the Yoder Women’s Club in 1977, always helping with the fall pheasant hunters’ dinner. She later joined the Cheyenne chapter of the General Federation of Woman's Clubs of Wyoming (X-JWC) after moving to the capital in 1999. She volunteered to bring birthday cakes to veterans at the Cheyenne VA Hospital and served on many club committees, focusing on conservation. She served as a member of the board of the Southeast

Wyoming Mental Health Center and was honored for exemplary service.

Phyllis was the genealogical genius of the family, caretaking stories and preserving vital records for generations to come. She never knew a stranger, striking up conversations with anyone she met. An avid reader, she particularly enjoyed the mystery novels of Sue Grafton alongside western dramas and the selections of her book club. She was a master craftswoman, excelling in cooking and fabric arts, particularly candy and preserves-making, sewing and embroidery, for which she received many purple and blue ribbons at the county fair. Phyl was also a great admirer of architect Frank Lloyd Wright, always eager to visit Wright-designed buildings.

In later years, her constant companions at home were her cats, Jacques and Mimi. She loved to travel, taking trips to the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Italy and Canada.

In 2011, Phyllis joined a group of veterans on an Honor Flight to visit the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., where she was thanked for her service by Wyoming's congressmen. At 95, Phyllis would again take to the air, this time riding in a two-seat 1942 Boeing/Stearman during a "Dream Flight" sponsored by the Ageless Aviation Dreams Foundation, which honors veterans in long-term care facilities.

The family would like to thank the staff at Pointe Frontier and Life Care Center of Cheyenne for all the love and care given to Phyllis.

Phyllis Black was preceded in death by an infant son, Steven; her husband, Grover; her parents, Frank and Blanche Hughes; a sister, Helen Worrall; and a brother, John Hughes. She is survived by three children, Nancy Sullivan Campbell, Michael Black (Cynthia), and Robert Black (Beth); a sister, Alice

Taylor; five grandchildren, Mark Black, Greg Black, Rebecca Black, Brett Sullivan and Jennifer Black; and four great-grandchildren, Breanna Black, Carter Sentenay, Leona Black and Nolwenn Black.

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JUN **28**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

Valley View Cemetery
30th Avenue
Torrington, WY 82240

Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of *Phyllis Elsbeth Black*.



June 27, 2023 at 01:37 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of *Phyllis Elsbeth Black*.



June 27, 2023 at 01:00 PM



“ *Gwammy always had a golden rule attitude. She gave without asking for in return and always treated people kindly and never complained about life. She was the greatest grandmother anyone could have.*

Brett Sullivan - June 24, 2023 at 07:57 PM



“ *EI, Kat Barnes and family purchased the Beautiful I Heart Bouquet for the family of Phyllis Elsbeth Black.*



EI, Kat Barnes and family - June 21, 2023 at 04:53 PM