

**Elsie Marie Woodard**  
**June 10, 1937 - April 14, 2026**



Elsie Marie Palander was born June 10, 1937 to Carmelita and Carl Palander, the third of four children on a homestead 12 miles north of Murdo, South Dakota in the same room her father had been born in 36 years earlier. She and her three siblings attended the Highland School each through the eighth grade, being taught by their mother, Carmelita. They then boarded with relatives in town during the high school years attending Murdo High School. Life was full of fun times with many cousins and family holidays spent at the Palander homestead. Her best friend was her first cousin Birdie "Roberta" Enright. She talked of the hard work of milking 17 cows, twice a day, turning hay bales in the summer, with rattlesnakes laying in the shade of the bales, Grandma Carmelita dispatching of those vipers who ventured close to the homestead with a shovel. They lived off the land, preserving their own food and processing the meat they raised, depending on very little from the store in town. She fondly relayed stories of the hardships and joys of that life, which have been written down. Ordering a favorite dog, Lassie, a collie, from the Sears Robuck catalog, along with their springtime chicks. She told of tornadoes and blizzards, getting hay dropped to the cattle from airplanes after a particularly devastating blizzard,

of losing the barn to a tornado and straw being driven into boards by the force of the wind. Bringing the truck battery into the house to listen to the radio in the evenings. Having to dress by the coal stove in the kitchen for warmth in the mornings, and her dad tying their socks, shirt sleeves and pant legs in knots to tease them. Or of her father "spanking" them with one straw from the broom, when they misbehaved. Her stories portrayed how hard they worked, but sounded full of contentment.

She married Clarence "Woody" Woodard on January 31, 1954. To this union three children were born, Carmen, Bruce, and Lisa. The family lived in Murdo, Chamberlain, South Dakota, Sturgis, South Dakota, Aberdeen, South Dakota, and Newell, South Dakota, where they were publishers and owners of the *Valley Irrigator*. They later owned Northern Hills Printing in Spearfish, South Dakota, before settling in Upton, purchasing the *Weston County Gazette* on July 1, 1976. She was always a very busy person, being Upton Chamber President, one of the founders of Cedar Pines Golf Course and their Ladies Golf Association president, a V.F.W. Auxiliary member, and a Weston County Hospital Board member. She was avid about fitness, and an exceptional cook. She and Woody divorced in 1996, and she moved to Colorado for five years, marrying David Paulley on June 16, 2002 in Hawaii. She enjoyed traveling and participating in the many aviation art shows across the country with her artist husband. They later settled in his family home in Osage, living there until his death on October 2, 2020. At that time, she moved in with her daughter Lisa and son-in-law Ben. She made her home with the LeVasseurs until her passing. Elsie enjoyed her large family in the area, and spending holidays with them, keeping up with their busy lives. She spent her

later years, enjoying reading, especially biographies, cookbooks, and magazines, watching her favorite westerns and keeping up with the local and national news, asking every Wednesday where her copy of the *Weston County Gazette* was, until the final week of her life. She lived a full life, with evidence of that visible in the archives of the newspapers she owned, and dedicated her life to for decades. She lamented the loss of her contemporaries, especially that of her dear friend and business colleague Karen Ackerman.

She leaves behind her three children, Carmen (Jim) Diehl, of Upton and Gold Canyon, Arizona, Bruce (Marilee) Woodard of Spearfish and Casa Grande, Arizona, and Lisa (Ben) LeVasseur of Upton; step-daughter Kris (Ernie) Lovato, Cheyenne; eight grandchildren, Buffy (Dan) Wirth, Gerald (Kitta) Haynes, Melaynee Trandahl, (fiancé Justin Christopherson), Jaki (Dan) Gustaf, T.J. (Salumie) Trandahl, Nick (Brittany) Trandahl, Matt Woodard, and Abbie Woodard; fourteen great-grandchildren, Andrew McMillan, Kade McMillan, Connor Helwig, Reece Riehemann, Sophia Riehemann, Emma Gustaf, Addison Gustaf, Kate Gustaf, Bella Trandahl, Thomas Trandahl, Micah Trandahl, Lily Trandahl, Holly Trandahl, and Story Trandahl; several step-grandchildren; her sister Margaret Judd of Rapid City, South Dakota; several nieces and nephews, and her companion and helper, Kathleen Lincoln.

Preceding her in death were her parents, Carl and Carmelita Palander, her siblings, Curtis Palander and Louise Hostler and their spouses, her first husband, Clarence Woodard, and husband David Paulley.

Elsie passed away Tuesday, April 14 at home surrounded by her loved ones. Graveside Services were held at Upton Greenwood Cemetery on April 19 at 2:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks if you would like to donate to a memorial, please do so to the Upton Ambulance, or the Upton Chamber of Commerce where her granddaughter Buffy is the current president.