

Hiawatha, KS

Jean Bechtold, 89, of Hiawatha, died Tuesday morning, September 22, 2015, at the Hiawatha Community Hospital.

She was born, September 2, 1926, at Severance, KS, one of four children born to Homer Eugene and Thelma Irene Turley Wilcox and was a lifelong resident of the Doniphan-Brown County area. She grew up on a farm near Severance where she attended country school.

She married Eugene Bechtold, August 24, 1942, at St. Joseph, Missouri. Soon after their marriage, he left to serve his country during World War II. After returning from the Navy, they moved to a farm near Severance where they raised registered hogs until 1955 when they moved to Hiawatha where Gene started Hiawatha Skelgas, with Jean being the bookkeeper. They operated this business a few years before opening "Gene's TV and Appliance" in Hiawatha where she again was the bookkeeper, operating this business until 1972, at which time, she became a homemaker. She continued to live on West Oregon till 2009 when she moved to Maple Grove Apartments to make her home prior to moving to Highland Care Center due to failing health.

Jean volunteered for BCDS Thrift Shop and for Brown County Special Education Co-op where she rode the bus with special needs children. She loved to babysit her grandchildren; cross stitch, and was a big help to her family.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Gene March 31, 1994; two brothers: Harold and Bob Wilcox.

Survivors include four daughters: Nancy Bechtold of Palm City, FL, Sue (Ken) Miller of McKinney, TX, Pam (Roger) Irvin, and Ann (Kevin) Lehmkuhl, both of Hiawatha; a brother Clarence Wilcox of El Dorado, KS; 9 grandchildren; with 15 great-grandchildren. Also surviving are sisters in law Ann and Lorraine; with several nieces and nephews.

It was Jean's wish to be cremated with private family inurnment at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Hiawatha.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Missy Newell Memorial Fund which may be sent in care of Chapel Oaks Funeral Home, 124 S 7th St., Hiawatha 66434.

A special message may be sent to the family at www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com