

Doris Ann Wessels Pannell | 1927-2015

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Doris Ann Pannell

Doris Ann Pannell, 87, died Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2015, in Plano Memorial service was Oct. 23 at Sonoma House in Carrollton, followed by a luncheon for family and friends. Mrs. Pannell's ashes will be interred beside her late husband at DFW National Cemetery in a future, family ceremony.

Doris Ann Wessels was born Nov. 16, 1927, at home on the family farm in Runnels County to first-generation German Americans Edna Emma Minnie Kruse and John Johnson Wessels. She was the second of seven children, three of whom did not survive early childhood, and was raised as part of a widespread, but close-knit, community of hardworking German immigrant farm families in and around Ballinger. She graduated from Ballinger High School in 1944 and attended (what is now) the University of North Texas in Denton, before moving to Dallas in 1948 to seek her fortune. The former Miss Wessels moved into an Oak Cliff boarding house for young ladies and, being ambitious, highly organized, quick-witted, diligent and reliable, soon got a job as an executive secretary for a vice president of Blue Cross.

Through friends, it was not long before she was introduced to a young veteran of World War II, Walter Wade Pannell. They quickly became inseparable and bonded in a marriage that endured more than 65 years, producing three children – Barbara Pannell Shields, William Wade Pannell and Judith Pannell Kockos – ending only with Mr. Pannell's death in July of this year. She survived him less than three months. Throughout her entire life, Mrs. Pannell exemplified the values of her Texas German heritage to work hard, waste nothing, create and build, socialize and celebrate life's events with food, drink, music, dancing and laughter. She was an award-winning quilt maker, and as a seamstress, she could glance at a Titcher's department store window and re-create the displayed dress for her teenage daughters from memory without a pattern. She crafted, embroidered and sewed innumerable blankets, doll's clothes, costumes and items of every description to amaze and delight her children, grandchildren and their friends. Mrs. Pannell was a talented cook and formidable housekeeper. Yet, she was the chief fun-maker for all children, an organizer of games and mischief and practical jokes, a Brownie Leader, a Camp Fire Girl Leader and friend and helper of Cub Scouts. She was a ruthless opponent at Wahoo and other games, taking on children of all generations. She did not like to lose.

Mrs. Pannell was preceded in death by her husband, Walter Wade Pannell; brother J.C. Wessels; sister Frances Wessels Miracle; and siblings Rufus Wessels, LeRoy Wessels and Peggy Wessels. She is survived by her children, Barbara Pannell Shields, William Wade Pannell and Judith Pannell Kockos; her younger sister, Arlene Wessels Elkins; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. Memorial donations may be made to St. John's Lutheran Church, 1100 W. Parsonage St., Winters, TX 79567, (325) 754-4820.