

Hiawatha, KS



Jeanne Eileen Parcels Mathewson, native of Hiawatha, KS, died in Topeka, KS, on November 4, 2012. She was born on March 14, 1922 at 400 S. 7th Street, Hiawatha, KS, to Lewis and Carrie Bernice Nigus Parcels. She had 6 brothers and sisters who preceded her in death. As a child, she advanced quickly at Central Elementary School in Hiawatha and graduated a year earlier than her peers. As a member of the Girl Scouts for 8 years, she earned the Golden Eaglet Award for her community service. She was also an accomplished musician throughout her life. Jeanne was a member of the Hiawatha High Marching Band. She played oboe, piano, organ, and violin. She was in a mixed chorus, known for her “perfect pitch,” and glee club member at Hiawatha High and the Epworth League Youth Program. She graduated from Hiawatha High School in 1939. She furthered her education and graduated with a dual Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics and Nursing from the University of Kansas and Kansas State University in 1944. Jeanne moved to California and worked as an occupational health nurse at the North American bomber factory in El Segundo, CA. Her longtime friend and future husband, Robert Edward Mathewson, and brother, Rex Parcels, strongly encouraged her to receive a commission in the Navy Nurse Corps. In 1945, she was commissioned as an Ensign in the Navy Nurse Corps. Her first assignment was at Treasure Island, CA, as an emergency room nurse. After this first year, she was transferred to Jacksonville, NAS, FL, and served as a dietitian in the Naval Dependency Unit at the Naval Hospital Jacksonville. She was then promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG). Jeanne was discharged from active duty in the Navy in 1946, and became engaged to Robert Mathewson who had already separated from the US Marine Corps. They were married on August 25, 1946 at St. Ann’s Church in Hiawatha, Kansas. Jeanne planned to join a Naval Reserve Medical Unit in St. Joseph, MO, but in 1950, she received a letter regarding a Navy policy that women in the Navy could not have dependents less than 18 years of age. By 1950, she had three children, Joseph, Marianne and James. Robert Mathewson was re-called into active duty for the Korean Conflict, and so she returned with the three children to Hiawatha, KS. Following Bob’s return from Korea, they moved to Kansas City where she worked as the operating room supervisor and nursing instructor at Bethany Hospital School of Nursing, Kansas City, KS, and at the VA Hospital in Leavenworth, KS. Jeanne also did private duty and office nursing in Hiawatha, KS. She and Bob retired in Hiawatha and build a log cabin for their retirement home in 1979. Jeanne served in the St. Ann’s Altar Society and choir at St. Ann’s Catholic Church. Jeanne and Bob were both members of the Hiawatha High School Reunion Board. She was a member of the St. Joe Sweet Adelines for 15 years, and was a member of the Homer White American Legion

Post, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the VFW in Hiawatha. She was also a member of the Brown County Election Board for 10 years. Jeanne and Bob received the Brown County Conservation Wildlife Habitat Award for their log cabin home and land in 1982.

Jeanne is survived by 5 children: Joseph Edward of Newport Beach, CA; Marianne Mathewson-Chapman of Arlington, VA; Jim Mathewson of Tulsa, OK; Suzanne Osborne of Berryton, KS; and Judy Mathewson of Van Buren, AR; 13 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

A rosary service will begin at 6pm followed by family visitation in Jeanne's memory at the Hiawatha Chapel Oaks Funeral Home on Thursday, November 8, 2012. Mass at St. Ann's Catholic Church will be held at 10 am and her internment with military honors will be at Mount Hope Cemetery on Friday November 9, 2012. In lieu of flowers, if you would like to make a memorial contribution to the Brown County Historical Society in Hiawatha, KS, please send to Chapel Oaks Funeral Home located at 124th South 7th St., Hiawatha, KS 66434. If you wish to send a message to the family, please visit the following website: <http://www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com>