

## *Linda M. Filchak (Krieger Neff)*

Mrs. Linda M. Filchak, 83, passed away at home Sunday, Oct. 4, 2009 while surrounded by family after a short bout with cancer. She will be remembered for her zest for life, her love of friends and family, her good works, and strong faith. She will be especially missed by the grandchildren with whom she shared so much time and so much fun.

She is survived by son Gaylen Dennis Neff of Auburn; daughter Cindy Joy Neff of Olympia; step son George Filchak; and grandchildren Christina Neff of Auburn, Ryan, Brennan, Whitney, Rachel and Jared Neff of Buckley; Joshua and Jasmine Engen of Olympia; Loretta Cain of Portland; and great granddaughter Kathleen Cain, Portland.

Linda lost her mother to colon cancer when Linda was only 25. She was also preceded in death by her father, brothers Nestor "Cash" Krieger and Clarence John "Pee Wee" Krieger, sister Irma Krieger John, husbands Arthur Neff and John A.J. Filchak, and granddaughter Loraine Filchak.

She was born Olinda Melitta Krieger on August 13, 1926 in Hazen, North Dakota to Gottlieb and Mary (Untereshner) Krieger.

Of Russian-German descent, Linda was raised in a German-speaking household in a farm community of about 600 people, primarily of German descent, where the winters are bitterly cold. Her mother studied from a German bible, and Linda was confirmed in German in the German Lutheran Church of Hazen.

Her father, Gottlieb Krieger, was born Feb. 5, 1894 in Russia – the same year he immigrated to America and North Dakota with his parents (Carl Krieger b.1861 and Mary).

Linda's upbringing during the depression years forever shaped her. Her father was a well driller and her mother a seamstress, cook and homemaker. Despite widespread financial difficulties, Linda made the most of her grade school and early high school years in Hazen. She maintained scrapbooks of her activities, stayed in contact with school friends, and continued to subscribe to the Hazen newspaper until her death.

During her junior year, the family moved about 80 miles south to larger Bismarck, North Dakota's state capitol. She graduated from Bismarck High School in 1945 and was active in band, music, bowling and the high school newspaper. She also worked as a nurse's aide for Bismarck Hospital and local families. Her goal was to "become a nurse".

The only one of her siblings to graduate from high school, Linda attended one year at State Teachers College in Minot, North Dakota and was employed in Bismarck when she met and married auto mechanic Arthur Neff, also of Bismarck. The couple celebrated their engagement on Nov. 4, 1946 and married on April 25, 1947. The couple honeymooned in the Seattle-Tacoma area, where they moved shortly after with many members of the Neff family.

The couple enjoyed 16 years together, first in Tacoma, then in a lovely brick rambler they had built on 10 forested acres near Brookedale Golf Course in Parkland. She did office and bookkeeping work at several Tacoma businesses and was involved in the VFW Ladies Auxiliary and enjoyed playing league bowling. In 1951 and 1954 respectively, the couple adopted two children, Gaylen Dennis Neff, and Lucinda (Cindy) Joy Neff. Linda cared for the children at home along with other children from the neighborhood.

In 1964, Linda married John Adam James Filchak, a Pacific Lutheran University graduate employed as a chemist with the federal General Services Administration (GSA). The couple relocated to Auburn in 1964 with Gaylen and Cindy and settled into a comfortable home where Linda continued to live until her death. After a few overly hectic years of being a mother, wife and Boeing employee, Linda took up full-time homemaking and began at least 45 years of active community service.

Because of her depression-era upbringing and strong Lutheran beliefs, Linda had a lifelong commitment to helping those less fortunate. Through her church, community service and volunteer work, Linda excelled in making the world a better place to be. Linda and John were long-time active members of Messiah Lutheran Church in Auburn.

Linda was actively involved in Auburn Elks Lodge, Auburn Lions Club, Auburn Elks Clown Club, Auburn Chamber of Commerce, Auburn Christian Action Program (ACAP) Day Care Association, Ms. Auburn Scholarship Pageant, Auburn Senior Center, Auburn YMCA, Special Olympics, Aid for Lutherans, National Cancer Society, Easter Seals, Seattle-King Co. Family Counseling Service in Federal Way and Lutheran Compass Center in Seattle. She also volunteered with local Alzheimer and nursing home visitation programs.

She was also named “Woman of the Year” by Delta Rho Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha Sorority, group she dearly loved.

For others, Linda served as a “second mother” who took a special interest in their lives. Her home was always open to family and friends, especially during the holidays, and she will be missed by many.

Linda lived alone for 15 years after John’s death on June 2, 1994. During this time, Linda renewed her commitment to good causes and stayed busy day and night with volunteer work, socializing and playing cards. She spent a huge amount of time with her grandchildren, whom she loved dearly.

Linda generally had good health throughout her life, except for a 1999 diagnosis of breast cancer, which was caught early and successfully treated. On New Year’s Day 2008, Linda surprised everyone when she successfully quit cigarettes after her doctor warned her that four decades of smoking could be catching up with her. Like so many of her generation, Linda started smoking long before its health risks were widely known. Her ability to quit smoking after more than 40 years was and is an inspiration to others.

On Sunday, October 4, 2009, Linda died, 15 days after being diagnosed with a type of lung cancer (small cell endocrine carcinoma) considered incurable and untreatable. Linda chose to spend her last days at home in the loving presence of family with help from Providence Hospice. She died without pain and at peace. Burial was Oct. 13, 2009 at Mountain View Cemetery in Auburn.

Linda will be remembered as a funny and fun-loving friend, and loving wife, mother, and grandmother, with an extraordinary commitment to the community and those less fortunate than herself.

In many ways, Linda’s life’s work reflected Christ’s teaching in Mathew 25:40:

*“I tell you the truth,  
whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine,  
you did for me.”*