Mildred Anna Friedel

Let’s celebrate the life of Mildred Anna Friedel-

Mildred Anna Brown grew up in Bethlehem, Pa the second oldest of 6 and the oldest girl. Her heritage was Penna Dutch and German. Her Father was Lutheran and her mom was Mennonite. She was a young girl during the great depression. She has told stories of the family standing in bread lines. Mildred’s grandfather Brown was a farmer and would bring the family food off the farm. If someone was hungry and appeared at the back door, my grandmother would have them come in for a meal. Grand mom and Grandpop Brown housed many generations in the home. My great grand parents Weiknecht and great aunt Anna lived with my grandmother Estella and grandfather Edward and their 6 kids. The sisters were Mildred, Ethel and Lillian. The boys were Edward, Richard and William. William still lives in Arizona and is 21 years younger then Mildred.

At 2am on washday my mom would get up to help my grand mom pile the laundry, sort and wash until she went to school later in the morning.

Grandpop Brown was a dough boy in WWI and in the trench’s in France. He came back to Bethlehem and worked at Bethlehem steel as an open hearth chemist, handling the chemicals and adding them to the open hearth to make the steel.

Grandpop had rabbits and chickens and a big vegetable garden in the backyard on Golf’s Hill to feed the family. Mom also told us about her walk to school. As a young girl she would walk down the hill and return for lunch and walk back to school each day. Some days for lunch in the winter months she would take a potato to have the school janitor place on the school radiator so it would cook for lunch.

Mildred graduated from Fountain Hill High School in 1940 and went on to get several book keeping jobs at the Bethlehem Steel during World War 2.

Mildred met Charles Friedel at a USO dance in Bethlehem. At the time Gray was a naval cadet and would use navy a trainer to over fly her house. They were married July 12th 1947 and she moved to Seaford Delaware to enjoy married life. Mom always relived the unpleasant time of living with her in laws after she married. Soon my dad fixed up an old tenement home so he and my mom could move into it. We called it the gray house and it is still on Tharp road in Seaford. They lived there over 12 years. I remember mom and dad planning their brand new home at 120 Holly Oak Dr in Seaford. My dad build most of the home himself on William’s pond. In1982 they moved to Salisbury Md to help Jennifer open Jenny’s Sewing Studio and moved to 1030 South Schmaker Dr.

Mildred spent several years working for Hastings and Eskridge in Seaford as a bookkeeper before children came along. Gray worked for his dad as a house mover; he worked at Becket’s Package store and as a field Supervisor for James A Hill in Seaford. Life was not always easy but she and Gray made a wonder family. Millie gave birth to Jennifer Kay Friedel in 1950, Gerald Gray Friedel in 1951 and James Edward Friedel II in 1958. Eventually all 3 children graduated from College, which was a mighty feat and something she was very proud of.

Mildred loved to sew and for several years made crafts to sell on consignment at several locations.

Once her children were old enough Mildred went to work at Seaford School district as a typist and teacher aide for 15 years. The benefits of friends, meeting the children and the state health benefits helped the family for the rest of her life.

Mildred loved to fish and she and the family were on the water every summer. Flowers were another passion and there was always a garden everywhere she lived with beautiful flowers for all to enjoy.

In 1982 Mildred retired from the Seaford Schools to go to work with her daughter and husband in a family business, Jenny’s Sewing Studio which was located in Twilley Centre in Salisbury for 26 years. At Jenny’s Mildred did the bookkeeping in the morning and enjoyed her passion to quilt and sew. She produced beautiful dresses, crafts and quilts and helped her daughter in any way she could.

Since Jenny’s Sewing Studio was a sewing machine dealer ship the 3 Friedel’s won many incentive trips and traveled each summer to many places in Europe like Italy, Spain and Holland. Trips were also awarded to Bermuda, Bahamas, Mexico and Alaska and Hawaii. Mom and dad went to Bermuda the first year in business. At one point Jenny’s Sewing Studio sold so many Singer machines 7 trips were won so the whole family was able travel to Paradise Island in the Bahamas for a week. It was a wonderful time.

When the store closed in 2008 the repair and parts and sewing lessons business moved to their home at 1030 South Schumaker Dr where Jennifer still operates teaching sewing classes.

My dad Charles Gray Friedel passed in 2014. Gray and Millie were married 67 years. My dad had been ill for several years and we all still miss him and think of him almost every day by remembering all the great times we had or the bits of wisdom he would share.

Since my dad’s passing mom and Jennifer have been frequent visitors to the local restaurants and have held game night several times a week. Mom also enjoyed her time keeping fit at Aqua Care and meeting many of the wonderful staff. Retirement is nice.

At 98 mom has had a wonderful life and has enjoyed her friendship with all. Her example and caring for people will be a great legacy. Let us celebrate Mildred’s life and remember her smile and love for all.

 In loving memory,

Jennifer and Jim