

# Arlene Evonne Bjerke Nelson

January 4, 1932 ~ February 26, 2026

Arlene E. Nelson, 94, passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family on February 26, 2026 at Memorial Medical Center in Modesto, CA after a short illness.

Arlene was born in Northwood, North Dakota on January 4, 1932 to Edgar and Bernice Bjerke and was raised on the family farm near Sharon, ND in Beaver Creek Township. Arlene graduated from Hatton High School in 1950 and married Robert (Bob) Nelson on April 3, 1951. They lived in Grand Forks, ND where they started their family; two boys, Timothy and Gary. In 1954, while Arlene was pregnant, they moved to Tracy, CA where Bob continued his teaching career. In Tracy, the Nelson family grew with the addition of Ronald, Jeffrey, Carolyn and Bradley.

Arlene was deeply involved in the Tracy community, volunteering for over 20 years for the Tracy Hospital Auxiliary. She performed her civic duty working with federal, state and local elections for 25 years. She was actively involved with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church teaching Sunday School and over the years held all of the offices in "Ladies Aid". She saw to it that her sons served as altar boys. Arlene was a member of the Tracy Moose Lodge, active with "Women of the Moose", Friends of the Military, American Legion Auxiliary and was a lifetime member of the VFW.

Arlene and Bob were constantly on the go watching their six children play in a variety of sports. Arlene and Bob enjoyed bowling in the Nevada Tours League and Arlene continued to be an avid bowler for over 50 years. Playing bingo was a passion for Arlene, especially at the old Chicken Ranch when it was just a bingo hall with paper bingo only. She won the special game called "Chicken Ranch" four times in one year, each time paying \$12,000. Bob continued to tease Arlene if she didn't have her bingo bag out saying, "Aren't you going to work today?" Another passion for Arlene was playing cards. She participated in a pinochle club with longtime, loving friends traveling to their respective homes for over 30 years until COVID ended their run.

Arlene decided to move into assisted living in December 2022 where she enjoyed friends and fellowship. She played Skip-Bo there daily with her dear friend Mary. Arlene spent many years at the Tracy Moose Lodge and the Lolly Hansen Senior Center with friends who shared her love for a variety of games, bingo, dice, dominoes and of course, pinochle. If it was a trip to the casino, her game of choice was Texas Hold'em. Arlene played her last game of pinochle while in rehab at Bethany Skilled Nursing Home in Ripon on February 12, 2026, with supportive and good friends Teresa and Harry.

Arlene was preceded in death by her parents Edgar and Bernice; brother Earl, her beloved husband Robert and three sons, Timothy, Ronald and Bradley.

Arlene is survived by her siblings, Sandra (Bob) Anderson, Diane Johnson of North Dakota and Douglas (Lois) Bjerke of New Mexico; numerous nieces and nephews, including nephew and godson Aaron Johnson of North Dakota; her children, Gary (Michelle) Nelson of Clovis, their children and grandchildren, Alicia (Daryl) Nelson (of CA), their child Payton Minugh; Erik (Ashley) Nelson (of CA), their children Maisie, Marshall and Harvey; Jeffrey (Phyllis) Nelson of Salida; Carolyn (Vernon) Arnaudo of French Camp, their children and grandchildren, Stacey Arnaudo (of CA), Scott (Patricia) Arnaudo (of OK), their children Luna and Andrew; Rocky (Mireya) Arnaudo (of KY) and their children Parker, Dawsyn and Harlow; Timothy Nelson's children and grandchild, Shannan Nelson (of WA), her child Payton Crosby (of FL); Timothy M. Nelson (of CA); and Bradley Nelson's child Ashleigh Nelson (of CA).

Our mother always had a delicious dinner on the table at 5 p.m. sharp and you better be on time if you were going to eat. Our parents especially enjoyed the long, long bonding hours their children spent at the table when she served the lovely liver and onions, thank the Lord for ketchup and our dog. Our beautiful mother Arlene will be remembered as an impeccably dressed, strong, full-blooded Norwegian with a true heart and a quick wit.

Thank you for every Christmas, Birthday, Valentine and Get-Well card so many dear friends sent over the last three months. Mom read each one while in rehab and truly appreciated your kind and inspiring words. The Nelson and Arnaudo families wish to express our deepest gratitude for the love and support during the loss of our beloved mother.

Services will be held at Tracy Memorial Chapel, 5 W. Highland Ave., Tracy, CA on April 10, 2026 at 11 a.m. Interment will be held at San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery, 32053 West McCabe Road, Santa Nella, CA on April 13, 2026 at 12:30 p.m. Services on Friday, April 10 will be broadcast and recorded on Tracy Memorial Chapel's Obituary Website.

