

Leone Grant had love of outdoors, neighbors, family

About this time every year, about 200 people around the world used to receive handwritten Christmas cards from Leone Grant.

A lifetime of friends looked forward to hearing about a small piece of her family's year, even if their own time with her was decades ago.

"They were just wonderful people. Everyone just really loved them," said Barbara Nance.

Grant died Nov. 18 at age 86. She was a woman who could become a picture of elegance to attend a formal military ball, then throw on some flannel and fish with the best of them the next day.

She and her husband, Archie, spent several months each year pulling fish out of the Strait of Juan de Fuca with the Nances and others who settled their RVs into a spot near Sekiu, Wash.

"They were great organizers," Nance said. Known for throwing a great potluck or rounding everyone up to go to dinner in Forks, Wash., Grant was always happy to show her friends a good time. And if someone new showed up, Nance said, "They'd know them before the day was over."

If the amount of salmon and halibut shipped to their loved ones over the years was any indication, fish should have feared the Grants' presence as much as their neighbors enjoyed it.

Born in Great Falls in 1920, Grant developed her love of hunting and fishing early.

"She shot her share of deer" as well as pheasants and other game, said her daughter, Carrie Houser.

She found a hunting partner for life when she met her future husband, Archie Grant, who happened to be renting a room in her house while he worked in the nearby oil fields before World War II.

When he left to serve, eventually becoming an Air Force officer, Grant worked at Boeing Field in Seattle. She rode a bicycle around the massive plant, running parts from place to place.



PHOTOS COURTESY THE GRANT FAMILY

Leone and Archie Grant on their wedding day. Leone died Nov. 18 at 86.

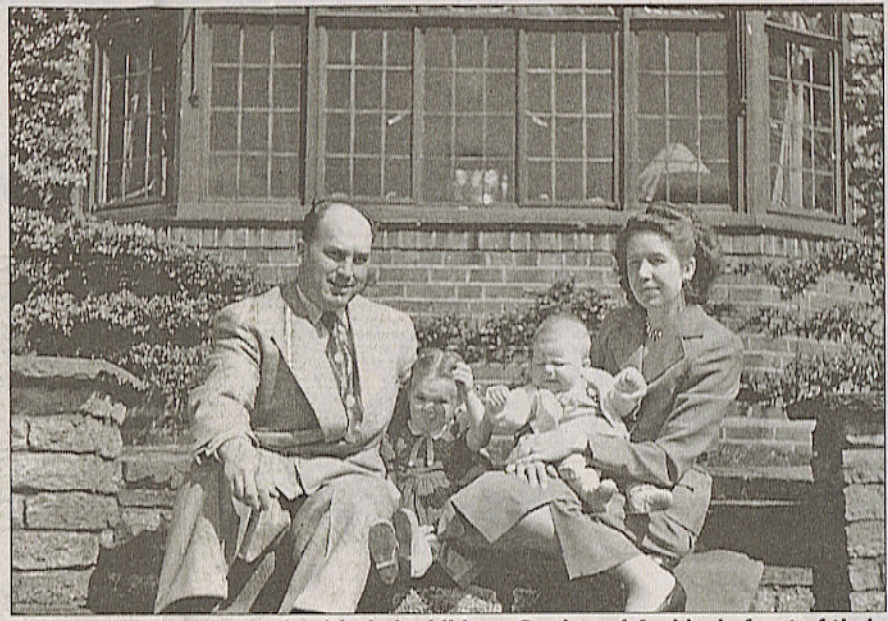
She was a skilled bowling coach, a Cub Scout leader and tireless chauffeur for her children as they went to sports practices, movies and endless other activities.

Three weeks after the war ended, Leone and Archie were married in Seattle. In the years that followed, they made their home in Illinois, Wyoming and Texas. They lived in Spokane from 1958 to 1964.

"The outdoors was what really got them," Houser said.

They retired in the Valley in 1969. Her father's military career also took them to England, where his salary covered the rent at a large estate in the country, complete with a staff.

Later they helped the daughter of



Archie and Leone Grant sit with their children, Carrie and Archie, in front of their house in England in 1954.

one of the caretakers when she moved to this country and became a nurse in Spokane.

In England, they witnessed the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953. Thanks to one of their fishing buddies, they even had the rare opportunity to view vaults containing the crown jewels, becoming some of the first Americans allowed to do so.

They loved touring old castles in England and the sites of the rest of Europe when they had the chance.

"I called our house the U.N. house," Houser said.

After her father's travels around the world on military assignments, he would always bring something back, like yards of silk from Hong Kong that her mother sewed into evening dresses and suits.

During their early adventures together, the Grants would have been content with or without children, Houser said.

When she and her brother came along, though, their mother devoted herself to their lives.

"She lived for us," her son Archie Grant Jr. said.

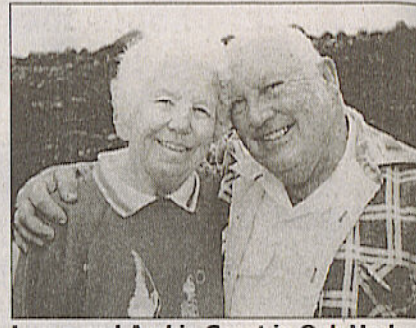
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Even as an adult, Archie Jr. said, his mom would call to see how his baseball team did at their last game.

With gardening, boating, playing bridge and the outdoors, her own life never lacked for richness, either.

In 1999, she and her husband acquired a 1969 Dodge Superbee muscle car as an investment with their son that she could never bring herself to sell. She drove it to several car shows, winning a few first-place trophies along the way. At a show on Fairchild Air Force Base in 2005, more than 200 people sang Happy Birthday to her when she turned 85, just after she took the second-place prize.

Other trophies garnered throughout her life included numerous fish caught from their boat, including a 41-pound king salmon she landed in 1960.



Leone and Archie Grant in Oak Harbor, Wash., in the early 1990s.

On the Web

To view a short multimedia feature to Leone Grant, go to www.spokesmanreview.com/tributes and follow the link packaged with the story.

Her children describe their RV as a cannery on wheels. Their parents even removed one of the lounge chairs to put in a freezer. Anyone who went fishing with them would go home with some of the 300-plus fish they caught each season.

"She knew how to cut the bait so the fish really liked it," Nance said.

Leone Grant had a knack for choosing the right lure for what was biting that day, Nance said, and if the fish weren't biting, she was always willing to fish a little more.

Tributes is a regular feature of the Valley Voice that celebrates the lives of Spokane Valley residents who have died recently. Seemingly ordinary citizens - who typically aren't featured in the newspaper - often lead lives that are exemplary or extraordinary. If you would like to suggest someone for this feature, please contact Valley Editor Jeff Jordan by e-mail at jeffj@spokesman.com, by phone at 927-2170 or write: Valley Voice Tributes, 13208 E. Sprague Ave., Spokane Valley, WA 99216.