

Surrounded by family, Viola J. Held, age 96, crossed over on Sunday, January 18, 2015 at the farm of her daughter Deborah, from complications of pneumonia.

Viola was born June 17, 1918 in Rock Grove, IL, daughter of Frank W. and Lula M. (Fulton) Maurer. In 1935, Viola graduated from Davis High School and attended the Rockford School of Beauty where she obtained a certificate as a Registered Beauty Culturist in 1937. She worked as a beautician in Freeport, owning her own shop, and after she was married she worked out of her home.

On February 3, 1945 she married Captain Harold E. Held, DVM, at the Embury United Methodist Church in Freeport. They had 3 children who were the center of her life.



Viola was a woman of many talents and if her hands weren't busy she was "wasting time." Her artistic skills spanned the crafts of crocheting, knitting, quilting, rosemaling, rug-making, and embroidery, which included beadwork embroidery of the Ojibwe Indians. In wood, she carved picture frames and plant stands, built a playhouse for her children, built dollhouses and shadow boxes in miniature and the furniture to go in them. In the 1950's, she was the President of the Freeport Hobby Club.

When her son became a Boy Scout, she joined the Scouting family, forming the Troop 13 Auxiliary. For many years she ran the Boy Scout garage sale, the proceeds of which went to build the Cook's cabin at Canyon Camp BSA, near Stockton. Over time, she organized numerous other fund-raising activities and made many items to be sold at the trading post to benefit camp. She also helped the members of the Ouray Indian Dancers create their dance outfits. Throughout the years, many hours were spent at work weekends at Canyon Camp. In 1971, Viola was presented with the "Silver Fawn," an award for women making outstanding contributions to Scouting at the local council level.

Weekends were spent in the great outdoors camping and fishing. On Sundays, she and Doc took their family fishing, most frequently on the backwaters of the Mississippi River. After his passing, she joined her children's participation in living history events of the fur trade era. She enthusiastically continued to camp with her daughters and son-in-law until she was 94. Highlights were the annual rendezvous at Grand Portage National Monument and Shinin' Times Valley.

Viola also loved to go to powwows to hear her son sing at the drum. Captivated by beautiful beadwork, she studied design elements and back home, developed patterns. Specializing in woodland beadwork & embroidery, she worked Ojibwe style.

She loved to collect antiques and spent many hours with her daughters at antique auctions and refinishing furniture. She had a wealth of knowledge about many of the old-time tools and skills and ways; she shared that knowledge gladly with her many young friends.

"Mausie" was a role model and inspiration to us all with her happy and loving spirit and everlasting enthusiastic engagement in the events of life.

Viola was preceded in death by Doc Held, her husband of 42 years. She is survived by her children Dwight (Cec Gallagher) of Missoula, MT; Deborah (special friend, Evie Duitsman) of Freeport; and Donna (Scott) Gelbach of Albany, WI; her dog Jenny Lou and grand-dogs Scooter, Katie and Maggie. She is also survived by sister Marjorie Dietmeier of Ridott, IL.

Cremation has occurred. A private Celebration of Life will be held by the family at a later date as Viola had wished.

The family extends a special thank you to the medical staff at the Monroe Clinic Hospital who cared for Viola, and to the Monroe Clinic Hospice team. Heartfelt thanks also to Deb, Evie, Donna and Scott from the rest of the family for sharing their homes with "Mausie" these last years.

Condolences may be sent to Deb Held, 4548 Stephenson St. Rd., Freeport, IL 61032. In lieu of flowers a memorial has been established in Viola's name and will be used to maintain the Doc Held Nature Center at Canyon Camp, BSA. Memorials may be sent to the above address.