

Would you get an F on your report card for chewing gum in class? My grandmother did.

June Bracewell Beckham was born June 7, 1923. June Bracewell was the fifth child of six, born to Estelle and Verne Bracewell. June had 2 brothers and 3 sisters. LaVerne was the oldest, born Oct 30, 1912, Kenneth, April 25, 1918, and Merlyn, the third, born November 26, 1919. Then came Robert, May 26, 1921, June on June 7, 1923 (she says her mom was running out of names) and finally, Mazie, October 1, 1925.

A couple family stories my grandmother remembers . . . One was the bad winter of 1928. Her younger sister and her both got very sick. Their parents made them stay home in bed, but since their rooms were not warm enough, their parents made a bed for them on the dining room table near the coal heating stove. They slept there several nights until they were feeling better. Grandma also admits that she is not a fan of water sports. After accidentally falling into a deep-water canal, she thought she was gone, but her brother, Bob, jumped into the water and saved her. He was always special to her after that.

June's favorite pet was a family dog named "Happy". Happy slept on the porch and could hear someone coming down the walk long before any human could. He wouldn't bark if it was a member of the family, but he would always bark if it was a stranger.

One of June's favorite games in school was playing softball and other ball sports with all the neighbor kids in town. Some evenings they would play "kick the can". That was fun too. One thing that she cherished the most was a set of decorated, wooden clothes hangers that her oldest sister gave her.

June had to leave school and run home at lunch time to feed bum lambs during lambing season. Her favorite pastime and subject was reading. She wanted to be a librarian so she could read a lot of books.

When Grandmother went to grade school, most of the girls wore dresses which their mom or another lady had made. Later, in the 1930s, the girls' fad was wearing the boys' striped bib overalls and saddle oxfords. In the winter, snow boots were essential. The hair styles would change. Some girls wore a "page boy" hair style, but most girls wore long bangs rolled up off the face in a roll and pinned with a bobby pin. They didn't use curlers, but made pin curls when their hair was wet, and held it with a bobby pin until it was dry, then combed and fluffed out their hair.

As a teenager, June hung around with three other neighbor girls. They stayed lifetime friends. They did a lot of things together, played a lot of softball, took walks, and talked a lot. They made crafts and snacked on popcorn they made. June completed three years of high school, got married, but later completed high school with the GED exam. One day in Girls Glee Club, they all went to class chewing gum. The teacher was furious and gave them all an "F" on their 6 weeks report card grade. That was the only "F" June ever got in school. She participated in 4-H a few years, when it first got started in their town. She also played on the girls basketball team. They did not travel to different schools, but played against different grades within the school.

My grandmother never had an "out of the home" job. She was always a homemaker, helping with children and helping on the farm. She worked in the sugar beet fields, thinning and hoeing beets with friends and family, for several years. She said the only place to go on dates back then was the movie theater or community dances. Birthday parties were also big celebration times.

June met Doug Beckham at a dance at the community building in Vale. They were married at the Methodist Parsonage in Sturgis on July 13, 1940. Together they raised three children on the home farm SE of Newell: Dennis Eugene, August 30, 1941, Gary Lee, May 2, 1950, and Sharleen Fay, March 7, 1952. She said the easiest part of being a parent is having the children. The most difficult part is knowing how to discipline and train them in the Lord and the way that they should go. Doug and June made a living from the farm. June would do the house work and grow a large garden, and thus did a lot of canning and food preservation. There were always 3 meals a day and most days, a neighbor would stop by for morning coffee or maybe just to get a bite of Grandma's tasty baked goods! One year, they raised 300 chickens and sold eggs to the local hatchery. Several years they raised 200 turkeys to sell. June helped in the lambing shed during lambing season and milked cows, when the kids weren't home. She drove the tractor, helping put up hay and any other odd jobs that came with farming.

June was known for her wonderful homemade angel food cakes. She would bake a homemade angel food cake for each of the family members' birthdays, up until about 92 years of age, when she fell and broke her hip.

June and Doug traveled a lot in their senior years. They visited and enjoyed Disney World, Epcot Center, and every state between there and California, where several of her sisters lived. The most famous people they met were Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter in Georgia. June's Grandmother Bracewell came to America from England with her five sons and settled in southern Iowa, near the Missouri border. They farmed and also ran a sorghum mill. There was a Bracewell castle in England, but much of it was destroyed by bombing during the War.

June said the hardest time of her life was the death of her father, December 10, 1958. The best time in her life February 17, 1953, when she accepted the Lord Jesus Christ into her heart and life. June valued her faith in God more than anything else in her life. Her words of advice are to tell the truth and ask God to help you every day and He will. Do the best you can in everything you undertake. Don't envy others. Strive to be positive in all that you do and say.

From My High School Interview (1991) with my Grandma June, by Jenna Bergum (Lamb).

June B. Beckham, 98, of Spearfish, died Wednesday, June 23, 2021.

She is survived by her children, Dennis (Ann) Beckham, Gary Beckham, and Sharleen (Jerry) Bergum; 10 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren; 4 great-great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Douglas; her parents, Verne and Estelle; and her siblings.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com.

The family invites you to join them for fellowship and lunch at the church hall following the graveside services. We thank you for your presence and condolences.



In Loving Memory Of

June B. Beckham

June 7, 1923 ~ June 23, 2021



I'm Free

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free
I'm following the path God has laid you see.
I took His hand when I heard His call
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day
To laugh, to love, to work or play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way
I found the peace at the close of day.

If my parting has left a void
Then fill it with remembered joys --
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss
Oh yes, these things I too will miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow.
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.
My life's been full, I savored much,
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief --
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your hearts, and peace to thee --
God wanted me now: He set me free.

In Loving Memory June B. Beckham

Born

June 7, 1923
Nisland, South Dakota

Died

June 23, 2021
Sturgis, South Dakota

Funeral Service

Wednesday, June 30, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.
Believers Fellowship
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiating

Pastor John Williamson

Musicians

Candy McKay
Marlene Kotab

Special Music

"Jesus Is All The World To Me"
"What A Day That Will Be"
"I'd Rather Have Jesus Than Silver Or Gold"

Pallbearers

Brett Beckham Jerrid Bergum Jerrid Bryson Bergum
Chad Lamb Josh Bach Clay Torgerson

Final Resting Place

Bear Butte Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota

When God Stoops Down

When God stoops down from Heaven and beckons with his hand,
One that we love so dearly, it's hard to understand.

But with faith's eye look upward, look just beyond the gloom,
And see your precious loved one, in Heaven's brighter room.

So lay aside your grieving, and look to God above,
He'll steal away your sadness and fill your heart with love.

~ Nella Walters