

Ida Ilene (Schwartzkopf) Laughlin

January 1, 1921 – November 13, 2013

Ida Ilene Laughlin, 92, of Rapid City, South Dakota, passed away Wednesday, November 13, 2013, at home of heart failure.



Ida was born January 1, 1921, to Henry and Elizabeth (Batt) Schwartzkopf on the family farm near Iroquois, South Dakota. She first attended a country school before her teacher encouraged her parents to enroll her at the South Dakota School for the Deaf because she was hard of hearing. Her Hall of Fame biography recounts that she became fully deaf after being knocked unconscious during an outdoor game while attending SDSD.

Ida graduated from SDSD in 1940. While attending school, she met James K. Laughlin at a school picnic. They married in 1940 and made their home in Rapid City, where they raised four children. James owned and operated Laughlin Printing Service, and Ida was a homemaker for many years. She later worked for Midwest Circuit, Control Data and MPI before retiring in 1986.



937-38 Girl Basketball Sextet
he Girls' 1937-38 Sextet in winning five of its eight games, has made the best record to
ate. Shown in the picture are:
lajorie Wells, Tyndall; Berneta Borghorst, Reliance; Mildred Catron, Camp Crook; Sirley
rdman, Corsica; Lavone Jacobs, tuthill; Ida Schwartzkopt, Iroquois; Della Mae Getting,
ioux Falls; Flora Van Dyk, Sioux Falls; and Coach May Curtis.

Ida and James were active in South Dakota's deaf community and developed lasting friendships with both deaf and hearing people. During the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, their home became a familiar gathering place for the local deaf community. New deaf residents arriving in Rapid City were often directed to the Laughlin home, where Ida welcomed visitors with coffee, treats and friendship.

She enjoyed attending SDAD meetings, conventions, banquets and summer picnics. These gatherings gave her opportunities to reconnect with friends and remain involved in the community she loved.

A longtime advocate for deaf and hard of hearing people in western South Dakota, Ida served on the South Dakota Association of the Deaf Board. During her board service, Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) was established in 1975. She urged SDAD and CSD to extend services to Rapid City and the Black Hills, emphasizing that rural communities should not be overlooked.

Her leadership and persistence helped bring a CSD office to Rapid City. She also taught sign language at the facility and supported the formation of the Black Hills Association of the Deaf, where she remained active and held several board positions.



In recognition of her years of advocacy, leadership and service, Ida was posthumously inducted into the SDAD Hall of Fame in 2015 in the Community Service category.

Ida loved socializing and approached life with a memorable motto: "Whatever you do, have fun doing it!"

Survivors included two sons, Ronnie (Linda) Laughlin of Rapid City and Donnie (Patty) Laughlin of Stevensville, Montana; a daughter, Tanya (Rob) Wilson of Rapid City; six grandchildren, Kristi, Matthew, Louise, Emma, Alisha and Chasity; and six great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, James, and her daughter, Dodie.
Ida's legacy lives on through her family, friendships and the opportunities she helped create for deaf and hard of hearing people throughout the Black Hills and West River region.