



Elsie Pearl Yates

November 14, 1944 - August 20, 2025

Elsie Pearl (Balbi) Yates was born on November 14, 1944, in Dillon, Montana, to Frank E. Balbi and Pearl Elaine Briggs. She grew up surrounded by a large and loving family.

On July 14, 1961, she married Thomas Wilbur Robbins, and together they raised six children: Cecil Esson, Baby Robbins (deceased), Thomas Wilbur, Billy Charles, Florie Marie, George, and Kelly Lyn. Thomas passed away in 1975.

In 1979, Elsie married Robert George “Rowdy” Yates. Together, Elsie and Rowdy shared a passion for creating and growing businesses. They opened Elsie’s Ceramic Barn in Cardwell, later expanded into Whitehall, and went on to operate the Sunlight Café. Eventually, they purchased and renovated the Black Bear Inn in Thompson Falls, where they built a restaurant, deli, hotel, and bar. After Rowdy’s passing in 1991, Elsie sold the Black Bear and later purchased the Wildhorse Bar in Plains, which she eventually sold before retiring.

Elsie enjoyed working with the public and had a gift for bringing people together. She was known as a devoted mother, grandmother, and friend. Those who knew her will always remember her warmth, generosity, and the deep love she had for her family and community.

Elsie passed away on August 20, 2025. She is survived by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, all of whom she loved deeply. She was preceded in death by her parents, her siblings, and her beloved husbands.

No formal memorial service will be held. A Celebration of Life is planned for September 27, 2025, for close friends and family. Those wishing to honor Elsie's memory may do so by donating to a cause close to their heart.