

A gift for a mom who said, "I don't need a thing!"

BY SHIRLEY GOERLITZ AND
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There comes a time when your mother warns you she doesn't have space for another ornament and she has so many plants she wishes you would take some home. Read her lips: "No more gifts."

Do what we did and share some memories with her instead! The effort is guaranteed to outshine any other present on Mother's Day, her birthday or any old time you want her to know just how special she is!

Here's an excerpt from the memories we shared with our mother, Cecilia Taylor, on her 87th birthday.

Dear Mom, I remember:

- You milking all those cows, feeding pigs, pumping and carrying water, chopping wood and kindling, hunting for cows, stooking, stacking hay

when it was so hot, and canning fruit in between running out to do chores and taking lunches.

- Your gardens! Gardens! Gardens! Elaine and I come by our addiction naturally.
- You correcting our grammar. "Snuck" seems to be a word today but it wasn't then.
- You bringing home a baby calf in your apron. I promptly called her "Moose" and she eventually raised good calves of her own.
- You driving the horses to pull the truck out. How happy you were when the boys were old enough to do it!
- You bringing in baby pigs on cold nights. One night, some got a little tipsy after a few drops of whiskey "over-revived" them.
- You taking me to the Christmas concert at the old school. We walked through the snow on that moonlight night and got a ride

home with a neighbor. Arthur was home with Daddy.

- You always got Sunday School papers and read them to us. In fact, no matter how busy or tired you were, you read to us. That's probably one reason why both Elaine and I still enjoy reading.
- You climbing up and down those stairs so many times, night after night, especially when we were sick. I never see a lot of stairs in a house without thinking of that.
- You were always there for us, through good times and bad. You were always at home when we got there each night after school, something we took for granted but which few children enjoy today.

And how could I forget?

- You making my dress for the first day of school.
- You and Daddy steaming Arthur and Bobby when they had croup.
- You always making time to curl our hair.
- You milking cows in the old barn with mud up to your knees.

Thanks, Mom! Love, Shirley

Dear Mom, I remember:

- Advice I took to heart: "Put something on your feet."
- Saying thank you costs nothing.
- Put something on your feet.
- Prepare your vegetables in the morning so you'll have a head start on getting dinner on the table.
- Put supper in the crockpot.
- Drink a cup of tea and you'll feel better.
- Set the table for breakfast before you go to bed.
- I remember: How you still love your wood cookstove and are a miracle worker when it comes to coaxing it to behave. You tickled me when the thermostat went out. Before you baked a pie crust, you put your whole arm inside the oven to gauge whether it was hot enough!
- How your garden has served as an inspiration, nourishing your spirits and replenishing your hope and good humor. A simple pleasure, it has served as a lifetime refuge from all your worries and problems. You have anticipated the success of every garden you have ever had with satisfaction and celebrated the triumph of fresh vegetables by telling us; "We're going to have new potatoes and fresh spinach today — and it's only Stampede Week."
- How you coined the phrase, "The cat is sitting in judgment on me." Mine do the same. I'm convinced it's the uni-



When Cecilia Taylor said she wanted no more gifts, her daughters decided to present her with lists of happy memories instead. Born in Okotoks, Alta., Mrs. Taylor energetically balanced the demands of raising a family of 4 with running a mixed farm with few modern conveniences. Universal way cats sit in the kitchen staring at you with their tails tightly curled while standing straight as ramrods, indicating their displeasure at your failure to feed them fast enough.

- How we sawed firewood, picked potatoes in the mud, and prepared vegetables ready to show at the Millarville Fair. You also tried to teach me to make bread like yours. However, if anyone wants to know more about you, the way you have worked and your character, all they need to do is look at your hands. They tell the amazing story of your love, wit, wisdom, strength and courage!

Thanks, Mom!
Love, Elaine

Postscript: We're grateful that we took the time to share some special memories of growing up with Mom before she passed away on Dec. 24, 2002, at the age of 91.

Sisters Shirley Goerlitz from Calgary and Elaine Thomas, who lives in Texas, collaborated on a list of memories as a gift for their mother