Karen Ann (Mack) Nelson was born on Saturday, October 29, 1947 at Watertown, South Dakota to Ralph T. and Eileen (Alcorn) Mack. She spent her early years in Watertown, attended school in Clark through 2nd grade, Webster through the 10th grade and graduated from Yankton High School in 1965. During high school, she spent her summers at the family cottage at Blue Dog Lake and enjoyed fishing and swimming. As a girl, she enjoyed painting paint-by-number pictures and was an avid reader.

Karen attended Northern State College in Aberdeen and earned her bachelor’s degree in elementary education and her master’s degree in administration. She attended college during the summer with her mother, who was a teacher. Having grown up with this role model, Karen always wanted to be a teacher as well. She lived in Andover while going to Northern State College and was a certified teacher’s aide for first grade in Milbank. Her first teaching job was in Yankton. She lived in Rapid City during the flood. She was later principal at Carthage and taught fifth and sixth grades at Scotland and Lesterville schools. Karen taught school for 29 years in Scotland, retiring in 2008, and enjoyed the time spent with her students over her many years as a teacher, reading specialist and administrator.

Karen married Rick Pierce in December of 1970 in Huron and they had two children: Jeffrey Lee and Julie Ann. She was united in marriage with David Nelson on August 19, 1977 at Carthage and they had a son, Matthew David.

Karen had a deep love of family, especially children. She loved spending time with family and loved every moment spent with her grandchildren. Karen also loved spending time with her nieces and nephews and their children. Karen will always be remembered as “Gram-Gram” by her grandchildren.

Karen enjoyed reading, spending time with friends, bowling on Thursday afternoons and watching movies. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Scotland and also the VFW Post #791 Auxiliary in Yankton.

Especially dear to her were her pets and her horses. She loved raising and watching her horses, going to horse sales and caring for her pets.

Karen passed away on Tuesday, December 11, 2012 at the Good Samaritan Society of Scotland at the age of 65 years, 1 month and 12 days.

Left to cherish Karen’s memory are her three children: Jeffrey Pierce of Rapid City, Julie Pierce and fiancé Mike Erickson of Brookings and Matthew (Jen) Nelson of Sioux Falls; six grandchildren: Matthew, Jacob, Jacie, Justin, Meredith and Evelyn; a sister, Donna (Don) Larson of Milbank; her mother-in-law, Kathleen Nelson of Scotland; a brother-in-law, Jerry (Mary) Nelson of Scotland; three sisters-in-law: Jeanette (John) Lisbeth of Viera, Florida, Marlys (Don) Wasmund of Worthington, Minnesota, and Mary (Rick) Lingberg of Sioux Falls; and numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Karen was preceded in death by her parents, Ralph and Eileen Mack, and her husband, David Nelson in 2003.

“A Mother holds her children’s hands for a while… their hearts forever.”