

## Neoma A Laken

Neoma Ann Laken was born June 16, 1934, the only child of Palmer and Grace Gast Laken. She was baptized at her maternal grandparent's farm December 30, 1934.

Neoma began her career at age 17, upon graduation from Breckenridge High School in 1952, as part time paralegal and part time veterans service office secretary. She was appointed Deputy Register of Deeds November 1, 1956, a position she held for 20 years. April 1, 1976, Neoma was appointed Register of Deeds (name changed to County Recorder in August 1976), elected to office four times thereafter (4 yr. Terms), serving as Wilkin County Recorder until her retirement on January 28, 1994, completing 42 years in county government. She is also a licensed abstractor. She has never married. Neoma has been very active in church and community activities, following a tradition set by her parents. She served two terms as president of her large Lutheran congregation, the first woman to be elected to the position. She taught eighth grade confirmation for many years, teaches adult Bible study and has served on many church committees.

Neoma has a 20-yr. career as a public speaker in a several state area, doing portrayals of women of the Bible, which she writes herself – first person and costumed. She currently portrays 15 women, Biblical and historical. She speaks on other topics and was listed in “Who's Who in American (Midwest)” 1994 for her public speaking and writing, and again in 1995-1996.

**(Note:** When I portray Katie (Mrs. Martin) Luther I carry Grandpa Paul's German Bible and say the greeting in German). Neoma has authored several historical booklets and nine historical pageants where are presented in the Breckenridge community. She writes a bi-monthly column for the Daily News (local newspaper) and is the unofficial historian of the county.

**(Note:** What I do might seem a flurry of activity. However, when I was 20 yrs. old in 1954 I fought a battle with a malignancy and finally won. I had ovarian cancers, two major surgeries and radiation – and was given a 20% chance of surviving the next 5 years. But I'm alive 40 years after cancer! There's a verse (Luke 12:48 (which says “Everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required”). I give back to church//community for the second gift of life given me).

Neoma had planned to work two years to make enough money to attend college. The malignancy forever put an end to further education.

Neoma views retirement as a new phase of life, a “second wind” to explore new challenges. She has ideas for writing books, travel plans and escalated her community involvement.

*Taken from Neoma Laken's family stories.*