



Joanne Donald (Zaa We Bi Ne Siik “Yellow Bird”) passed on to the spirit world on Tuesday, March 24, 2015. Joanne was born on November 2, 1935 and raised on the Nett Lake Indian Reservation (Bois Forte). Joanne moved to Lake Vermilion (Bois Forte) with her husband Gary W. Donald in 1978. Joanne graduated from the Orr High School in 1953. She went to work in the area of education as the Home School Coordinator at the Orr High School, the Home School Liaison in the Bemidji Public School System and then as the Education Director for the Bois Forte Reservation. Joanne had a strong interest in helping youths in pursuing their education. Joanne was very intelligent and had a lot of wisdom. She was also very outspoken and knowledgeable in the world of tribal politics. She was an excellent cook, loved watching the Food Network and reading cookbooks. Some of her other interests included being with her husband out in the woods of Bois Forte gathering berries, harvesting and picking wild rice and listening to pow wow and country and western music. Joanne enjoyed spending time with family and especially her grandchildren and great grandchildren whom she loved dearly. Joanne’s main focus in life was her entire family. She is preceded in death by her daughter Coleen Lynn Donald Jennings; her mother Emma Strong; brothers, Herbert and Reginald Strong; a sister Clara Whiteman and several nieces and nephews. Joanne is survived by her husband of 60 years, Gary W. Donald; daughters- Gayle (Jim) Littlewolf of Bemidji, Leigh Ann Donald, and Carolyn Donald, both of Tower; Grandchildren: Wenona (Don) Kingbird, Jamie (Billy Joe) Copenace both of Bemidji, Andrea (Hershel) Gorham of Oklahoma, Joanna Boyer of Zim, Jessa Boyer of Minneapolis, Emma Lee Jennings of Cass Lake, and Gary Proudchief of Bemidji; Great Grandchildren, Amayah Jo Littlewolf, Aazhidegiizhig Kingbird, River Sonny James Kingbird, Brynnley Ella Copenace all of Bemidji, Nehoni Animikii Gorham of Oklahoma, Evolet Bodhi Joanne Mayo of Minneapolis, Gary Wayne Donald III, and Coleen Jade Proudchief both of Bemidji; a brother Wilbert Strong of Nett Lake, along with numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

SERVICES: At Joanne’s request there will be no funeral services. Her family is lovingly honoring her wish. Arrangements are with the Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook. To sign the online guest book or send a condolence to the family, go to: www.mlakerfuneralhome.com