Last surviving child of PSU's first president dies

Helen Brandenburg Carney, the last surviving child of William A. Brandenburg, the first president of Pittsburg State University, died on July 18 in Farmington, N.M. She was 96 years old.

Mrs. Carney was born on Nov. 20, 1907, in Mason City, Iowa, to William and Altana Brandenburg. She moved to Pittsburg in 1913 when her father was named president of the Kansas State Manual Training Normal School of Pittsburg. She earned a bachelor of science degree in physical education from the school in 1929, which by that time was known as Kansas State Teachers College of Pittsburg. She taught school in Kansas for several years.

In 1937, Ms. Brandenburg married Lyle Carney and moved to Gallup, N.M. She worked as a substitute teacher and later became the only real estate saleswoman in the area.

In memory of her father, Mrs. Carney in 2003 gave $100,000 to establish the William A. Brandenburg Scholarship. Brandenburg, who served as president of the university from 1913-1940, is generally credited with moving the early normal school to its status as a modern university.

Mrs. Carney was a member of the First United Methodist Church and held offices in the Mary Martha and the Naomi Rebecca Circle. She was a cub scout den mother for four years. She was a member of the Chapter C PEO, the Wednesday Bridge Club and the Gallup Historical Society. She was known as the "cookie lady" and was also interested in painting crafts, fishing, camping, sewing and traveling.

Mrs. Carney was preceded in death by her husband, Lyle, her son James, her parents, three brothers and two sisters. Survivors include a son, Edward Carney, of Farmington. Services will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, July 22, at the First United Methodist Church of Farmington. Burial will be at Sunset Memorial Park.

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By The Morning Sun staff

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