

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Myrtle Viola Fjerestad

Age 90, of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Passed away on March 7, 2008.

~ PRECEDED BY ~

Husband, Fred, Son, Eugene

~ SURVIVED BY ~

Daughter, Darlene

Grandchildren, Delphine, Crispin, Austin

Sister, Gladys Peterson, Brother, Morris Lindstrom

SERVICE: 11AM Saturday, March 15, 2008
Praise Christian Center, (763) 533-3929
4100 Douglas Drive, Crystal, MN 55427

VISITATION: 5-8PM Friday, March 14, 2008
Albin Chapel, 6855 Rowland Road, Eden Prairie, MN. 55344

INTERMENT: Monday, March 17, 2008
Elim Lutheran Church Cemetery, Osakis, Minnesota

MEMORIALS PREFERRED TO: Donor's Choice



Memory of Myrtle

By her daughter, Darlene

Everything about Mom involved family. From the day she was born, I think she was destined to be the one people around her needed. When she was little, of course, everyone had a pitch in to survive. I remember Grandma Allie telling me how much she depended on Mom for everything.

Mom was born in a log house built by her grandfather, Andrew Lindstrom. When it was ready in 1882, he sent for his family to come over from Sweden. Her father, Martin, was just two years old.

When they moved to "The Sand Farm", Mom was three years old, and Clifford was a baby. She remembers in her journal, "Mama and us kids walked the mile and a half to the farm, after Papa moved many wagon loads of stuff, with 6 year old Wilbur. We walked past the old 101 School House and turned off the county road on to the long driveway to the grove of trees where our little farm house stood. It was a sunny day. The baby, Clifford, was in a black buggy with the hood up to keep the sun out. Wilbur and Papa were waiting there. Everyone was excited and tired."

The Sand Farm was the family home during The Depression. Grandma was famous for doing miracles with little. There were always lots of chores for everyone, but Grandma Allie was a good cook. Together, they survived on practically no money. Mom told stories of cows and horse medicine, drought and worry in the summer, and the hungry stove in the winter. She lived there until she was 18.



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These were the experiences which shaped her lifelong orientation to children and family. It was the center of her life and a recipe for survival.

Mom often said, "Somehow it just seems I've been babysitting all my life." When she was five years old, her dad needed help to pick potatoes on the northwest 40 and was so reluctant to leave the two month old baby Gladys alone, even if she was sleeping. Her mother made Mom realize how important it was to follow her instructions exactly. She gave Mom a white dish towel and told her to sit and watch the baby, rock the cradle a little if she cried, and if she cried a lot she was supposed to hang the towel on a certain branch of a tree outside. They would come. Allie told her later, she just knew she could trust her to do it. She was a remarkable child.

When Mom was about seven, she learned a lesson about prayer from her Parochial School teacher, which stayed true for her. There were two barking dogs a "Joe's Farm" which terrified her every day walking to school. They came right up to her ankles. She told her teacher, and wondered why God didn't make them stop, because she prayed every day. The teacher said, "Yes, but the dogs never bit you", and Mom realized, "Of course! It's really all that matters!" When she stopped being afraid, the dogs stopped coming, too. Since then, she always prayed about things. By the time she was 14, she realized, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," means you don't want because all your needs are met.



As Myrtle got older, she was always supposed to take care of the kids so her mother could get some work done. Gladys told me she remembers playing outside, but Myrtle was never playing. She was always inside taking care of the smaller kids and helping with housework.



After he was ten years old, Wilbur was needed to help in the fields, so when Grandma was "laid up", Myrtle was the surrogate mother. In her journal, she remembers the births of five younger brothers and sisters, and all the illnesses and worries of the months before. Hearing a baby cry, she knew it was finally over.

When she left home, Myrtle went to work in Alexandria for a chiropractor named John Fjerestad. She worked in the home, and it's where she met Fred. They were married and had two children, Gene and Me. Her life and interests just naturally flowed together with the family lives of her brothers and sisters, church people, neighbors and friends. She was indeed "The Babysitter", and everyone needed her.

My memories of Mom are of course from a child's point of view. The stories she told of her life frightened me a lot. Her childhood seemed unbearably hard. I guess I was afraid it was how my life was supposed to be. I see her now, and I realize, as she did at seven years old, it's the fear which makes it unbearable. If we pray, God keep us from "getting bit".

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My favorite family memories are about trips in the car. We took trips to see Ruby, up north, and trips to Carol and Wilbur's farm. I loved every one of them. When I was seven, we started camping, which was again "trips in the car". They were always fun. "Tenting", as Mom called it was a lot of work, but she always baked and made so much food ahead, the food was part of the fun.

I think our vacations were what Mom remembered best about those years, too. She seemed more relaxed. We could do anything we wanted. She could forget about babysitting responsibilities. Gene and I were happy. There was peace, and I think she enjoyed spending the quiet times with Dad. I know after Gene and I were gone, they still went camping in the trailer they bought. She always talked about it in letters.

One way or another, every vacation trip emphasized her core understanding of life, which was family, and I see now it's what makes those memories so important to me. Dad, Gene and I looked to her for family. It was automatic. I didn't realize until a few years ago, she looked to us.



When Dad died, half the family she looked to was gone, and she was devastated. Her every day life, every day thoughts, every day companion was gone. I'm afraid I was a poor substitute for Dad. Having been sick for so long, I was involved with getting better, and, too late, I realized her mind had gone with him. By the time I truly focused on being her family, her mental health was in trouble. I see in her journal, she was inconsolable. I never knew. I'm so sorry, Mom.

I have often thought, what we are is what we remember, and in a way, life is memory. Mom's life made memories in the hearts of people everywhere. Children remember her care and love, and if later in their lives they needed her, she was always generous with her time and attention. Many people have told me how she helped them through some difficult time, and the stories usually involved children and family.

Knowing all these things, I can now say, I know Mom is with her enormous family in heaven; and, if memory is life, her life continues and grows in the hearts of all the families of people she knew and helped.

So, I say, "Goodbye" to you, Mom.
Know how well you are loved.
Know God keeps you in our minds,
And keeps us in His Heart,
Until we meet again.