



Rita Smith

May 13, 1923 - May 27, 2007

Rita Ruth O'Connor Smith, 84, a resident of Edgewood Vista in Bismarck, died May 27, 2007, at her home with her family at her side. Funeral services will be held on Wednesday at 10:30 AM at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck with Rev. Thomas E. Kramer officiating. Burial will be at St. Mary's Cemetery in Bismarck. Visitation will be Tuesday from 2:00 - 9:00 PM at Parkway Funeral Service in Bismarck where a rosary and vigil service will be held at 7:00 PM. Visitation will continue Wednesday one hour prior to the service at the church. Rita was born on May 13, 1923, in Powell, South Dakota, the west river country of South Dakota, to her rancher parents, John J. O'Connor and Ellen Ethel Colvin O'Connor. She was the youngest of five siblings, and a treasure in her family. The Dust Bowl and Depression sent the family from prosperity and ranching to Dell Rapids, South Dakota, where Rita went to school, graduating as salutatorian at St. Mary's Academy. Rita obtained a job as secretary and bookkeeper at E.W. Smith Insurance Company, and worked there until she met a returning veteran of World War II, Richard J. Smith. They married on June 6, 1946, and as part of the greatest generation, continued to be part of the bed rock of the United States for the rest of their lives. Rita and Richard lived in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, raising four sons until moving to Bismarck in 1961, where she lived until the end of her life. She completed raising her four sons, indoctrinating them with a respect of tolerance and of education. She was part of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit parish where she served as a volunteer and Eucharistic minister; her faith was a large part of

her life. She also volunteered at St. Alexius Medical Center in the intensive care unit as an aid each Friday. Rita was a member of the Mothers Club, the Serra Club, and other civic organizations. She and her husband owned and worked until retirement at Insurance Facilities of North Dakota. After retirement, Rita and her husband shared their time between traveling around all of North America in their GMC motor home and going for long walks all around Bismarck, holding hands, to the joy of those who watched them. They visited Italy and Ireland and were planning other trips until her husband died in 2000. Since that time, she had been a member of the Edgewood Vista "family" and loved her new home where she enjoyed having help living out her life. Her illness was sudden, but she was surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren at the time of her death. She was grateful for the staff at Edgewood Vista and hospice caretakers. Rita is survived by her four sons, Richard J. Smith Jr. Sherrilynn Sperling Smith, Terrance E. Smith Bethanne Gordley Smith, Thomas William Smith Patricia Patterson Smith, and Sean O. Smith Brenda Tschider Smith; thirteen grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents; her brothers; her sister; and the love of her life, Dick Smith. Although she had lost all of her past, she loved the future generations displayed in photos in her home. She will be missed by all those who remain. In lieu of flowers, donations may be directed to the God's Child Project, PO Box 1573, Bismarck, ND 58502 or the Hospice at St. Alexius Medical Center in Bismarck.