



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.

Tribute Wall

MD

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with your.*

Marv and Carlene Dockter - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DO

“ *I will always remember Aunt Rita as one who had a positive outlook on everything. When ever She was near there was laughter.Aunt Rita will indeed be missed.*

Dick O'Connor - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ *I can hear her voice, I can see her face, all those reflections of her sons and thier families. Her optimism and her advice. You knew that if you went to visit, she wasn't going to let you give up. She always made you feel special. She and Dick went to visit my mom for years when others stopped coming. I know that she looked after my dad when she knew he was sad. She was pretty special - she loved you all so much.Mary*

Mary Seaworth - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

KB

“ *Rita was an incredible women, always had a smile for everyone. She loved so much and in turn was loved by so many. She will be missed by everyone who knew her.*

Kathy Coad Brown - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ To Rick, Terry, Tom, & Sean. You all have Our deepest sympathy. Hope things are good for you. May God Bless you through this time of grief. Rita was a lovely lady. Now She is resting with Dick. Well have a good day Love, Laurel & Carol Schiro

Laurel and CAROL Budde Schiro - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JO

“ Your mother was great at sending us updates about your families at Christmas time. We are sorry for your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. We hope you will keep in touch with our family. Sincerely, Jim and Phyllis O'Connor

Jim and Phyllis O'Connor - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Where do I start. First my wishes. I wish that I could have seen your smile one last time, it always made me feel good. I wish that with this smile I could have given you a big hug, these made me feel safe. I wish that you could have met my future wife Kathy, I think that you would have liked her. She makes me smile and is there to give me comforting hugs when I need them. I wanted to thank you for the life lessons that you taught me. The ones that parents just don't touch on but are important none the less. I want to thank you for buttery eggs and coffee bread and always having your fridge stocked with sugary drinks. I want to thank you for your love and I promise I will reflect that love for the rest of my life. You spent alot of time on this earth making sure that we would make it. You spent the time you had as well as possible. Now that time has slipped on to the next place, a new time where you and Grandpa can hold eachother once again. I hope you come see us every once in a while. Make sure that we are safe and happy. I love you
Grandma.Conor

Conor Smith - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

BO

“ *Rita Smith*

Bill and Sandra O'Connor - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ *Dear Rick, Terry, Tom and Sean: Our deepest sympathy to all of you and your families in the loss of Great Aunt Rita. I have very fond memories of a very happy, lovely lady. She and Uncle Dick hold a special place in my heart. We hope you find comfort during this difficult time knowing that Rita and Dick are now walking hand in hand in heaven. God Bless you all. Love, Kathy and Dean*

Dean and Kathy Budde Castle - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LC

“ *I have many fond memories of "Rita Ruth", as I used to call her. On my many trips to Bismarck, she graciously entertained me. We would attend fashion shows, dine at the Gourmet House restaurant, have wonderful dinners in the Smith backyard and sometimes just sit around the living room drinking scotch. I always admired her involvement in the community and deep spiritual commitment to the catholic church. I know she will be missed by all whose lives she has touch, especially mine. My heart goes out to Rick, Terrance, Tom, Sean and the rest of the family. Goodbye Rita Ruth, Love Linda*

Linda Christman - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ To a woman who taught me what life was really meant to look like, to a woman who held my hand in times where I thought I was all alone, to a woman who laughed with me and let me cry on her shoulder. There is an amazing thing about a Grandmother that alot of people will never know, something that most will never be able to experience. It is the safety of their home, and the size of their heart. My Grandma had an open door, open ear and most importantly an open heart and arm policy. There were many times where nobody understood other than my Grandma. There were many times that I was going to run away to the safety or their arms and their home. Family always came first. Which was very evident when you looked into the crowd at your game and there they would sit side by side watching, supporting, with a simple wink and a great big smile. They were there with a pat on the head or a pat on the shoulder in mass at Cathedral. If you weren't lucky enough to get a pat on the head or a hand on the shoulder there was always a smile and wink as they walked past. They never expected anything from us in return. They often said they realized how busy a young person's life was and that they would always be there when things settled down a little bit. They had a quiet way of loving us whether cuddling on the couch or sitting in the crowd we knew they were a phone call away. If they had to drive 4 hours to be there or 4 minutes we knew that they would be there no questions asked and no judgments passed. I thank you for being our safe haven, for being our rock, for being our open door, open heart and open arms. If it hadn't been for you this world would not have seemed so kind. I love you from the bottom of my heart. I am the woman I am today because of your love and your lessons...and for that thank you isn't enough!

Amber - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM