



In Loving Memory
CELEBRATING A LIFE

Marlene Sylva Nelson

Date & Place of Birth

January 1, 1935 ~ Watford City, North Dakota

Date and Place of Death

April 14, 2017 ~ Watford City, ND

Funeral Services

11:00, Tuesday, April 18, 2017

First Lutheran Church

Watford City, North Dakota

Officiating

Mark Honstein

Music

Caroline Schwartz ~ Organist

Mark Suelzle ~ Soloist

Nick Valenzuela ~ Saxophone

Amanda Presteng ~ Trumpet

Pallbearers

Gus Nelson

Joe Nelson

Michael Pacheco

Shelley Suelzle

David Beckman

David Valenzuela

Ushers

Kevin Langerud

Dara Langerud

Final Resting Place

Schafer Cemetery ~ Watford City, North Dakota

Arrangements By

Fulkerson Stevenson Funeral Home - Watford City



In Loving Memory Of

Marlene S. Nelson

January 1, 1935 - April 14, 2017

Marlene Sylva Sanford was born on Jan. 1, 1935, the first child of Sigrid (Broderon) and Ingeman Sanford.

She was born in Watford City in the home of Leonard and Maude Sanford. Marlene spent her first years in the Banks area, moving to town when she was in the 5th grade. Their house had no electricity, plumbing, or bathrooms. They had to run to the outhouse during the freezing winters and used newspapers for toilet paper. She walked 2 miles to school. Every Saturday night they would go to town to shop and socialize.

Marlene graduated from Watford City High School in 1953. She was very active in school, participating in anything musically related; she sang, played flute, and accompanied groups on the piano. On Sundays she drove to the country churches with the pastors to play piano at the services. One of her crowning achievements was being a drum majorette for 5 years. On special occasions she would bring out the fire baton. From the time she was little, Marlene enjoyed being the center of attention, with her blonde hair, quick laugh, and big smile.

She graduated from Minot State Teacher's College in 1955. While in college, she continued to be a majorette, was first flute in the band and on the honor roll. She enjoyed the busy social life and loved the attention of the boys!

Marlene's first job was as a 2nd/3rd grade teacher in She worked for 2 years before her career aspirations were thrown aside when she met a handsome young veterinary student who came through town on a summer internship. The story goes that she was standing in front of Lundeen's Drugstore in a yellow and white striped dress with yellow shoes when he drove by. The rest, we say, is history. Marlene Sanford became Mrs. Robert (Bob) Nelson on June 23, 1957.

They lived in St. Paul, Minot, Hebron, and Park River before moving back to western North Dakota in 1967 where Bob opened the Watford City Veterinary Clinic. Marlene used her love of music and people and her education, education to serve her community.

She participated in the Women's Club, taught Sunday school; started the first Children's Choir at First Lutheran Church, organized the Centennial Choir, served on the

Good Shepherd home board; subbed at the grade school, and worked at the library. She was honored to be chosen as North Dakota's Mother of the Year in 1993.

One of Marlene's greatest achievements was being a mother and grandmother. She loved spending time with her children and grandchildren. She was the kind of mom and grandma who would get down on the floor and play. Because of her teaching experience, her children knew numerous nursery rhymes, finger plays and songs. She read to her children all the time, but she hid the Dick, Jane, and Sally books from them so they would have something to learn in first grade. As a grandmother, she spent countless hours with her grandkids, coloring, singing, and making up stories with sound effects, whether a wrestling match, a rodeo, a piano recital or school music program. They grew up thinking all grandmas were like this, not realizing how special her time with them was.

Marlene was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa in the late 1970s and became totally blind by 1983. She had always had a mild hearing loss but was diagnosed with Usher's Syndrome, which eventually progressed to a severe hearing loss. Marlene dealt with her blindness and hearing impairment. Another hurdle began when Marlene was initially diagnosed with Essential Tremors, which worsened to the point where she qualified for Deep Brain Stimulation. It was mostly successful until they determined that she also had Parkinson's disease.

Marlene passed away at the Good Shepherd Home in Watford City on Good Friday, April 14, 2017.

She was preceded in death by her husband Robert Dale Nelson, her parents Ingeman and Sigrid Sanford and her brother-in-laws Vern Suelzle and Arne Leom.

She is survived by her sister Beverly Leom, brother Douglas (Jean) Sanford, son Tim (Lisa) Nelson, and daughters Kris Pacheco and Geri (David) Beckman, grandchildren Amanda (Brian) Presteng and their children Annika, Samuel and Norah, Allison (James) Arcadi, and thier children Dominic, Clare and Simeon, Michael Pacheco, Gus Nelson, Joe Nelson, Laurel Nelson and Grace Nelson, Aunt Lucille Broderon and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

