

## Erna May Marks Pidwerbecki



Born to Ernest and Anna Marks in their northeastern Montana farmhouse on March 14, 1924, Erna went on to live a rich and purpose-filled life. She attended Saco public schools until high school graduation in 1942. Erna then packed her bags and left Montana for the first time on a train bound for Washington DC and a job with the Navy Department, where she did her part to support the war effort.

Two years later, her father fell ill, prompting Erna to return home. Erna studied business at MSC for a year before relocating to Fort Peck, MT to work in the civil service. She met her future husband, Walter Pidwerbecki, in December 1945. He had just been discharged from the Navy after serving in the South Pacific. A whirlwind courtship ensued and they were married on June 29, 1946 at St.

Raphael's Church in Glasgow, MT.

Erna became an active partner in their farming business while raising eight children. She was immensely proud of the fact that all eight of her children graduated from college, six of them with advanced degrees. She also claimed that all 43 of her grand and great grandchildren were exceptional. Genius even!

Walter suddenly died in the fall of 1982 when Erna was only 58 years old. She continued to farm for two years with the help of her younger sons, Jon and David. She subsequently leased her farm, but continued to live in Glasgow until 1999. During that time, Erna found great comfort in studying the Scripture. She taught Bible study classes, trained to become a lay minister and often was tapped to read the scriptures during Mass at her home parish. As the number of Catholic priests in NE Montana dwindled, Erna found purpose in conducting services in outlying parishes. Although Erna would never claim to be, others considered her a Scripture Scholar. She was also known for her delicious pies and beautiful roses. To protect her roses, she employed every known pesticide in her never-ending battle against invasive aphids and grasshoppers!

At the age of 75, Erna sold her farm land and relocated to Mission Ridge in Billings, MT, where she lived independently in her cherished third floor apartment. She enjoyed many new friendships, and kept fit with walking, swim aerobics, Wii bowling and chair yoga. She was a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church and for many years served as a lector for services at Mission Ridge. Erna celebrated her 94th birthday on March 14, 2018.

The last nine months of Erna's life were spent at St. John's Lutheran Ministry Fischer Cottage, where she died peacefully on November 17, 2018.

She was reunited with her husband Walter (d. 1982), her daughter Hope Pidwerbecki Hronek (d. 1985), her father Ernest, mother Anna, sisters Elizabeth Callahan Seraphin Grubbe, Elinor Marie Marks, and Shirley Marks Bell, brother William Marks, and grandson Brian Pidwerbecki.

Erna is survived by children Michael (Karen) Pidwerbecki of Rancho Cordova, CA, Sandra (Tim) Tangan of Livingston, MT, Karen (Jerry) Stokes of San Mateo, CA, Dawn (Bill) Bray of Belgrade, MT, Jane (Lynn) Higgins of Highlands Ranch, CO, Jon (Kay) Pidwerbecki of Talladega, AL, and David (Nancy Herald) Pidwerbecki of Portland, OR, brother Everest Marks of Saco, MT, sister-in-law Adele (Robert) Zanon of Beaverton, OR, 43 grand and great grandchildren, and 31 nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, 2055 Woody Drive, Billings, MT on January 4, 2019 at 10:00 am, with Fr. Steve Zabrocki officiating.

A memorial service will be held at 3:00 pm on January 4, 2019 at The Vista at Mission Ridge, 3840 Rimrock Road, Billings, MT, in the multipurpose room to accommodate residents who are unable to attend the funeral service. Pastor Elisabeth Daniels will officiate.

Ever practical, Erna left instructions that she not be buried in the winter time. Her family will place her ashes next to her husband Walter at the Glasgow Highland Cemetery in June 2019.

The Pidwerbecki family extends heartfelt gratitude to all who were so kind and caring to Erna in her last months, especially her friends and staff at Mission Ridge, Vista and the hospice and nursing staff at Fischer Cottage.