



Alma Grietje Field

October 12, 1930 - May 19, 2024

Age 93 of Columbia Heights passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on May 19, 2024.

Survived by children Bob (Lori), Mike, Debbie (Ron) Kordiak, Darlene (Jerry) Kordiak, Denise (Willis) Boley, and Matt (Joanne); 23 Grandchildren, and 35 Great Grandchildren.

Casey and June Remember Alma

On October 12, 1930, Alma Grietje Swart Field was born, weighing 6 ½ pounds, and raised on a dairy farm 5 miles north of Wilmington. She was delivered by Dr. Houston Moore and her father. Mother told me that she was born with blonde curly hair, which later turned dark.

Alma was the 4th of 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls, born to Dirk and Danie Swart. Alma was the first daughter. Also, she was the first granddaughter of the 35 grandchildren born in our family compound. That is a lot of cousins, 27 to be exact.

Alma was named after her two grandmothers, Alma Wise Southerland, who was born in Kingstree, South Carolina, and Grietje Bont Swart, who was born in Broek in Waterland, Netherlands. Alma was fortunate to know both sets of grandparents.

We lived in a family compound with 9 homes. The first home built on the dairy

farm was for our grandparents, their 8 sons and one daughter. As each son married, Grandpapa built and furnished them a home near his. The sons and their sons all worked together on the dairy farm. Grandpapa would not allow women or girls to work on the farm. He believed their place was to take care of the home. Our father's sister, Tantalena, bore these enormous responsibilities for her parents and 8 brothers. In the 1920's and 1930's, without modern conveniences, there was an overwhelming amount of work to be done, cooking and cleaning.

Casey said that this is why Alma never learned how to milk cows, but she sure learned a lot about helping our mother and many others. Alma was a wonderful helper for our mother. She helped with all household chores and even helped our mother with community activities.

At age 14, Alma took over the care of her baby sister, me, because Mama was sick after I was born. Alma said the most wonderful thing to me. She said it was a privilege to wash my diapers because it made her feel "big." Washing dirty diapers in 1944 was a difficult task involving first filling an outside cast iron wash pot with water, then building a fire under it to heat the water for washing the diapers.

Alma shared a story with me the last time I had the privilege to visit with her. When she was quite young, she was out walking on the farm and Daddy asked her to give a bunch of flowers that he had picked to Mother. On her way she saw one of her aunts. Aunt Evelyn asked her if she wanted a cookie. Alma said "yes" and gave the flowers to her aunt in gratitude. When Daddy got home, he asked if Alma brought the flowers home. She told him the truth about what she had done. I asked her how old she was when this happened. She said that she was old enough to know that there were no cookies at her house. Our mother had 7 children in 10 years and there was not much time for cookie baking.

Alma loved peanut butter. Casey remembers one of her birthdays when Grandmother Swart and Tantalena gave her a big jar of peanut butter for her

birthday. That would have been before 1941, when Grandmother Swart died.

In 1936, Alma was ready to enter the first grade, but because her birthday was on October 12, she had to wait another year. The state's cut-off date for starting school was age six by October 1st. In 1937, she started school at Wrightsboro Elementary, which was only a mile from our home. She was chosen to be on the Safety Patrol to help with student traffic.

Alma and her brother Casey and sister Helen took piano lessons. At the school they performed a piano trio: 6 hands, one piano, playing a march. When Alma was a teenager, she joined Bethany Presbyterian Church. Here she was active in the youth groups, sang in the choir, and helped with the chores to help take care of the church.

Elementary school was from grades 1 to 7, then the students had to go into town for grades 8 through 12. Alma's last 4 years were at New Hanover High School. She was initiated into the National Honor Society. She played in the band. After graduation she went to Women's College in Greensboro, NC and completed a one-year Business Course. She returned home to a good job, and this is when she met Bob Field.

On March 22, 1952, Alma married Robert Louis Field. Bob took Alma home to live in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A wonderful family sprang forth from their union. The family she left behind in North Carolina missed her greatly. It was not long before our father and mother decided to drive to Minneapolis, which took 3 days. At first, my brother Charlie and I were included in these trips, then it was just me with them. When I was 16, we flew and that was quite an adventure. Casey told me about visiting Alma in 1953. He was on his way to the Army base in Ft. Louis, Washington, from where he would be deployed to Korea. He got to spend two special days with his sister before going overseas.

Casey also told me about how much Alma loved rocks. She would collect at least one from her many trips and put them in her garden. Knowing this, Casey would often pick up a rock on his trips and sent it to her. On one of his trips to the Netherlands, he found a loose cobblestone in front of the Hague. With permission from Jan Peter, one of our cousins, he picked it up and mailed it to Alma. Casey wonders if that is the one she kept in her china cabinet.

When we visited Alma and her family, she and Bob would take us on trips. One time we went to Yellowstone, another time we went up the North Shore of Lake Superior and into Canada and much more. Visiting our family in Minnesota was always wonderful.

Alma left a large family behind, but she never forgot us. She remembered birthdays with cards and sent the most wonderful Christmas gifts. There were boxes filled with all kinds of treasures.

Alma's love for raising flowers and having beautiful gardens was greatly influenced by her grandfather who raised flowers while running a dairy, by the family farm that changed from a dairy into a flower farm in 1946, and by her mother, who loved nothing better than to work in her yard. All of our siblings have valued working with the soil and plants.

All of Alma's experiences growing up contributed to the woman she became. Alma was a loving presence as a wife, a daughter-in-law, a housekeeper, a mother of 3 sons and 3 daughters, a grandmother to 23 children, a great grandmother to 35 children, and an avid gardener. Whatever Alma was involved in, her church or her job, she was respected for her exceptional work ethic and her caring personality.

Amazing, yes that is what Alma was, amazing.

So it is with all my brothers and sisters, amazing.
Thank you for being in our life.

Alma Swart met Sgt. Robert Field, USMC, at Camp Lejeune, NC in September 1951, where Robert was recovering from wounds sustained during the Korean War. Alma and Bob were married on March 22, 1952 in Castle Hayne, NC. Alma Field moved with her new husband to Columbia Heights, MN, and lived with Grandma Field on Central Avenue, across from the Heights Theater.

Alma began working at the Baker Building in Minneapolis as a receptionist. One of her many duties involved collecting and sorting coins from the telescope atop the Foshay Tower. She held that position until two weeks before their first child was born in April of 1953.

Alma and Bob built their first and only home in 1954, moving in on January 5, 1955. They were able to afford the home because it was a duplex, and Grandma Field contributed to her part of the property. After two more years of budgeting, Alma was able to add two flowering shrubs and sod to the yard. Alma once shared a funny story about some unusual flowers she had never seen in North Carolina, which made a beautiful bouquet for the kitchen table. After they wilted, Alma realized they were a weed, and she learned that the new flowers she discovered were dandelions.

As Bob and Alma's children grew up, she was able to devote more of her yard to gardening. What started as a relaxing hobby became a mission to beautify her yard and the city she called home. She expanded this hobby to Edgemoor Park across the street from her home, Murzyn Hall, and St. Matthew Lutheran Church, where she proudly contributed her time, talent, and gifts to their gardens.

As the Field kids grew and attended school, Alma returned to the work force at Zayre's Shoppers City on 44th and Central Avenues. She began working in their cash office, assisting in accounting and reconciliation of the daily receipts. She held that position until the store's closing, where she almost immediately found employment at Northeast State Bank on Broadway and Marshall on September 3, 1980. Alma started as a bank receptionist but worked her way up to Personal Banker and stayed until her retirement in 2012 at the age of 82. She made many lifelong friends during her career at Northeast, where she was recognized for her outstanding customer service.

Alma always had a strong faith and commitment to the church. She joined many committees and participated in church events, where she cultivated many lasting friendships among many members of the congregation. Alma enjoyed "greeting time" each week, where she caught up on the daily lives of her friends and welcomed new members.

Celebrating Easter and Christmas was very important to Alma. She was extremely thoughtful in planning the holiday gatherings, so they were special and memorable for her entire family. This included Easter egg hunts with unique eggs (like the "ouchie" egg and the golden egg) and a variety of prizes which allowed each of grandchildren to win something. Christmas was her favorite holiday, where she started asking for lists in the fall to ensure that each child received something important to them, along with the clothes, dolls, toys, books, etc that she packed into giant-sized Santa bags. Alma made sure the gift bags were equal in size so that nobody felt slighted. She had themes, including hockey or figure skates, wooden shoes from Holland, or new bedding in the character or interest of each child. As the grandkids grew, Alma continued with gifts for her great grandkids and loved their reactions to her very thoughtful gifts. Christmas celebrations included good food, catching up with siblings and cousins, meeting and holding new babies, and highly

competitive bingo games.

Alma was the most loving, generous, and forgiving person in our family. Her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren were in awe of her capacity for love and her ability to treat everyone individually with whatever they needed at the time. Her energy was contagious, as she was driven to love and help everyone in her family. She accepted each of us as we are, and we could always be ourselves with Alma.

She was very active until she was injured in a fall on April 30th. Alma died on May 19th, surrounded by her family. We are all in awe of her amazing life and the lessons she taught us about loving each other.

Memorial service 11 a.m. Thursday, May 30, 2024 (visitation 1 hour prior) at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 4101 Washington St. NE, Columbia Heights. Private interment Hillside Cemetery.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 30. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
4101 Washington Street NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55418

Memorial Service

MAY 30. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
4101 Washington Street NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55418

Tribute Wall

RC

“ I got to know Alma at Zayre’s Shoppers City while I worked there also. I remember her as a fun person to be around. I just learned of her passing while at the Columbia Heights Fire Dept. last night for a get together after the Heights Parade. My heart felt Condolences to the Family, and RIP Alma.

Ron Chan

Ron Chan - June 29, 2024 at 07:02 PM

JM

“ I remember Alma as a kind, gentle person. My mother was very fond of her. She always had the best flower garden in Col. Hts. I remember all her kids very well. They were great neighbors. May she rest in peace. Jim Montague

jim montague - May 30, 2024 at 12:58 PM

TF

“ Ted Fischer and family. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Alma Grietje Field.

Ted Fischer and family. - May 29, 2024 at 10:57 AM

TF

“ Ted Fischer and family. purchased the Beautiful i n Blue for the family of Alma Grietje Field.



Ted Fischer and family. - May 29, 2024 at 10:57 AM



“ *Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Alma Grietje Field.*



May 28, 2024 at 12:54 PM



“ *It was an honor to work with Alma for many years at Northeast Bank. She was a true professional and advocate for her customers. She was a dear friend and one of my most favorite people in the world. Thank you, Alma, for teaching us to stop and smell the flowers. Always - Sue Sjoselius*

Suzanne Sjoselius - May 28, 2024 at 11:03 AM



I knew Alma from Northeast State Bank. Just found out she passed. She was the kindest person at the bank

Deb (Dady) Dunn - October 03, 2024 at 01:34 PM



“ *Swartfamily in Holland planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Alma Grietje Field.*

Swartfamily in Holland - May 27, 2024 at 02:35 AM



“ *Swartfamily in Holland purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Alma Grietje Field.*



Swartfamily in Holland - May 27, 2024 at 02:35 AM

SF

“ SMU Anesthesia faculty planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Alma Grietje Field.

SMU Anesthesia faculty - May 23, 2024 at 06:01 PM

SF

“ SMU Anesthesia faculty purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Alma Grietje Field.



SMU Anesthesia faculty - May 23, 2024 at 06:01 PM

DS

“ Dirk Swart planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Alma Grietje Field.

Dirk Swart - May 22, 2024 at 08:11 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Alma Grietje Field.



May 22, 2024 at 08:11 PM