



Ann Margaret Overgaard Madsen Preus

October 2, 1927 - June 18, 2025

We announce the passing of our beloved mother, Ann Margaret Overgaard Madsen Preus, 97, on June 18, 2025, at Pillars of Prospect Park Memory Care Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, following a long illness with breast cancer.

Ann was born to Danish immigrant parents, Kristine Olesen Madsen and Vagner Overgaard Madsen, on October 2, 1927, in Brookings, South Dakota. They raised her with a "go for it" attitude. In her youth she loved roller skating, playing on a girls' basketball team where her nickname was "Windmill Annie" for her height, lifeguarding, and winning awards for rifle target shooting. She was passionate about art and music, playing violin in the orchestra, and earning her BA in Art and Journalism from South Dakota State University. Ann's early career in newspaper journalism led her to seek opportunities, such as the time on a trip she happened to be near Eleanor Roosevelt's car, and Ann knocked on her car window door to ask for an interview! Nothing was beyond Ann. Later in life people said of her, "She could do just about anything." She made things happen.

Ann met the love of her life, David Walter Preus, when he was a new pastor in Brookings. David came to family dinners in the Madsen home and always said he was smitten with Ann. They were married for 70 loving years and created a remarkable partnership! Ann faithfully supported David in their Lutheran life of

service, starting with a small-town parish and culminating in international church leadership. She knew how to gracefully support David's service leadership with all people, including interfaith leaders and dignitaries from around the world.

Ann will be remembered for her Danish American tradition of hospitality and welcome. This ranged from beautifully decorated formal dinner parties with church and civic leaders at their home in Minneapolis; to always welcoming family, friends and parishioners for a cup of ready coffee and sticky buns; to making it known that neighborhood kids could come over anytime. She was always trying to offer a second or third serving of food to take care of her guests! At the family cabin in northern Minnesota, Ann would invite everyone over for scavenger hunts, fun games, and plenty of dock food.

Ann's sense of class, creativity, art and beauty were ever present. She picked out creative fabrics to sew gorgeous dresses, create table runners, or design anything from textiles, such as forest scenes on curtains. She even literally created nature-scene dioramas in their home's built-in buffet, making it her artistic easel. She regularly picked flowers from the garden for fresh bouquets. Ann loved to create and see beauty all around her.

Life also brought challenges and Ann was a fighter. In the 1970s her car was hit in an accident, and Ann experienced what is now known as a traumatic brain injury. She could no longer play violin and had to relearn her basic math skills. This prompted Ann to invent her own novel system to teach mathematics using four colors and prime numbers. She also went back to school in her 50s to earn her Master's in Education from the University of Minnesota and made new friends and networks. Over the years Ann tried to expand the reach of her education system; she often felt frustrated as a female entrepreneur in that era. Her dream was for all children and people with disabilities to be able to learn in ways that worked well for them.

Through the years Ann always went all out to surround her family and friends with loving care. Later in life, in her 90s, when she developed dementia and breast cancer, Ann lived "in the moment" with her family, friends and caregivers at the memory care center of Pillars of Prospect Park. Despite difficulties, she continued to be bold and create joy around her, and she was admired for her bright smile, blue eyes, and overall kindness. She would regularly notice something interesting and say, "Isn't it wonderful!?" or give a big hug, saying "I love you soooo much."

Ann is survived by her children Martha K. Preus, David A. Preus (Carmenza), Stephen J.M. Preus, Louise M. Parish, Laura E. Preus (Michael); grandchildren Natalie (David John), Christian (Robekkah), Katharine, Andrew, Daniel (Varsha), Brita, Johan, Nathan, Annabel, and Belden; great-grandchildren Raegan, Ryder and Arya; and many nieces and nephews, relatives and friends.

Preceded in death by her husband, David Walter Preus; sister Esther Hanson and brother George Madsen; and sons-in-law Anthony Klarman and John Parish.

The family extends thanks for all the loving and supportive wishes. A celebration of life service will be held on Saturday, June 28, 2025, at Central Lutheran Church, 333 South 12th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55404. The visitation will be held at noon, the service at 1 pm, and light refreshments at 2 pm. The service will be live streamed on the church's website at centralmpls.org.

An inurnment will be held at Lakeport Township Cemetery on Saturday, July 12, 2025, preceded by a service at Trinity Lutheran Church, 150 2nd Street

NE Laporte MN, 56461, times TBD.

Any memorial donations may be directed to Luther College and Luther Seminary.