



Fern Lucille Gudmestad

October 10, 1918 - June 3, 2020

Fern Lucille Hanson was born to Emil and Julia Hanson on October 10, 1918, at their home in Seattle WA. Because of the wide-spread influenza epidemic that year, the weary attending doctor missed recording her birth, something that was rectified many years later. Fern grew up with two older brothers, Donald and Earl, and a close circle of loving aunts, uncles, and cousins. With her family, she was active in Bethany Lutheran Church, where she began her life-long deep commitment to her faith.

Fern's public-school education in Seattle went from BF Day Elementary School to Lincoln High School where she was named the outstanding female athlete in her class. She received her bachelor's degree in 1941 from the University of Washington in painting and design. She spent her sophomore year at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN, where she met her future husband, Reverend Lawrence (Larry) Gudmestad, from Valley City, ND.

Fern and Larry married on August 25, 1942, and their first home was in Bellingham, WA, where Larry was the pastor of three small Lutheran churches. In 1945, they moved to Minot, ND, and as the pastor's wife she frequently rose to the occasion to substitute for the organist, teach Sunday School, fill in on Rev. Gudmestad's radio show, and entertain visitors from all walks of life. They lived for a year in Boston, MA, while Rev. Gudmestad did graduate study, and she organized memorable family visits to many historical

sites. They moved to Minneapolis in 1955, purchasing their home near Minnehaha Creek where Fern lived for 58 years. Rev. Gudmestad died in 1986. In recent years, Fern resided at York Gardens' memory care unit.

The primary focus of Fern's life outside her home was working with women of the church. She was President of the Western North Dakota District of the Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) of the Lutheran Free Church. She served as Chair of the WMF Literature Committee in the 1950s.

In the 1970s she was President of the Southwest Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church Women (ALCW). Members of that board have stayed in touch with each for decades. From 1981 – 1984, Fern was the National President of ALCW. Her daughters remember her speaking to thousands of women in Detroit's convention hall in 1984.

Fern was a delegate to the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, B.C. in 1984. She was active on boards and committees of many organizations including Lutheran Social Services, Luther Seminary, Lutheran Bible Institute, Augsburg Women's Club, and Ebenezer Society. In 2004 Fern was recognized by Augsburg College as a Distinguished Alumnae.

For over 30 years, Fern was a sought-after speaker at mother-daughter banquets (best known for her doll house talk which she did over 500 times), retreats, and local and national church women conventions. She was on the American Bible Society's Speakers Bureau for seven years in the 1960s. Fern also was a volunteer speaker in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Fern authored many religious articles and booklets including Bible studies, women's organization program ideas, and leadership training materials. She wrote a monthly column in *Scope*, the national publication of the ALCW. In 1986 she represented the former ALCW as one of three co-chairs of the new

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) women's organizing convention – using her parliamentary procedure skill to get their constitution ratified.

Fern and Larry were members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church since 1971. Fern was a participant in Bethlehem's prayer chain and her beloved study group, "The Groupies." In the last few years, faithful and caring Bethlehem friends spent time with her over a cup of coffee and cookies.

Creativity was a hallmark of Fern's life. She sketched, wrote in her journal, made prints for cards, created original games, gardened, and decorated her home...still doing many of these things well into her 90s. Many children and adults enjoyed seeing her collection of over 20 doll houses displayed in her basement.

Fern enjoyed travel throughout her life. Early on she enjoyed the road trips to the national parks in the West that her father organized. Later she recorded her travels in detailed journals. Some of her favorite trips were to Norway, Egypt, China, and Hawaii.

Her family is grateful for the careful and extensive records that she collected and organized so that their Hanson and Gudmestad family history and genealogy is known and accessible to them. Fern liked to attend events at Sons of Norway and wear her "bunad" at Augsburg University's Velkommen Jul to acknowledge her Norwegian heritage.

Fern is survived by her children – Julie Laudicina (Joe), Kim Gudmestad (Kay), and Joan Gudmestad. Her daughter, Jan Tousey (Charley), preceded her in death in 2009. Fern was always delighted with the company of her grandchildren Kai Gudmestad (Amy), Tessa Gudmestad, and Berit

Gudmestad Foulks (Patrick). She is survived by five great grandchildren, Elijah and Lucille Gudmestad; Cora, Connor, and Emmett Foulks. Fern is survived by her cousin, William Hanson. Her survivors also include Hanson and Gudmestad nieces and nephews and their children.

Fern died from this century's pandemic, Covid-19, on June 3, 2020. The irony is not lost on her family that pandemics bookended her life. What happened between these two world-wide events was Fern's full life of service, faith, creativity, family, and love.

As you might guess, Fern made plans for her funeral, an event that won't happen in this unusual time. One of the hymns she selected is a wonderful exclamation of what she saw as her purpose in life. Here are lyrics that speak for her:

My heart is longing to praise my Savior,

and glorify His name in song and prayer;

For He has shown me His wondrous favor

And offered me all heaven with Him to share.

Text by Princess Eugenie of Sweden

Translated by P.A. Sveeggen

Music: Norwegian folk-tune

Memorials preferred to Augsburg University, Office of Institutional Advancement, 2211 Riverside Avenue, CB 142, Minneapolis, MN 55454 (www.augsburg.edu/giving/how-to-give).

Tribute Wall

RR

“ I’m not sure why Fern just came to mind, but I think it has to do with the fact that I have been mentoring and discipling teenage boys and got to thinking of what adults were influential when I was young. Fern came to mind. Her brother, Earl, married my mom in the early 70’s and I remember her as someone who genuinely cared about me. I can only hope to leave the same lasting memory on the boys I work with.
René Randel

Rene Randel - September 30, 2022 at 07:56 PM

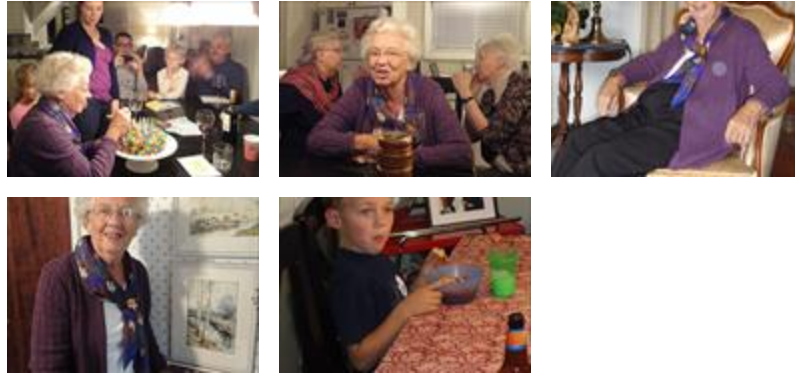
DD

“ Kim,
I saw your Mom's notice in the paper and wanted to reach out to you and Kay with my condolences. What an amazing woman, not to overlook her 101 years! A life to truly celebrate.
Hope you are well,
Don Davies
Zimmerman, MN

Don Davies - June 13, 2020 at 03:04 PM

JL

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Julie Laudicina - June 06, 2020 at 03:51 PM

JL

“ 8 files added to the album Memories Album



Julie Laudicina - June 06, 2020 at 03:29 PM

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Julie Laudicina - June 06, 2020 at 01:55 PM

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Julie Laudicina - June 06, 2020 at 10:32 AM