



Melva Leona Peterson

October 5, 1927 - April 2, 2025

Melva Leona Young Peterson (née Niebuhr), born on October 5, 1927, at Loretta Hospital in New Ulm, MN, lived a life full of love and dedication. Growing up in Gibbon, MN, with six sisters and one brother, Melva graduated from Gibbon High School and moved to Minneapolis, MN, where she worked at Gamble Skogmo, Inc. Her life took a romantic turn when she began writing letters to a soldier she had never met, supporting him while he served in the Pacific Theatre. This soldier, Elroy (Jim) Young, became her husband on July 26, 1947, at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

The couple first lived in St. Cloud, MN, where Jim attended St. Cloud Teachers College, before moving to Whittemore, IA, for three years. In 1955, they settled in Sleepy Eye, MN, where they raised their five children and hosted an international student. Melva worked at the local care center for twenty-one years and at Del Monte during the packing season. She enjoyed bowling, playing golf, cards, dancing, and the Minnesota Twins. A strong supporter of the American Field Service (AFS) program, Melva welcomed Masaaki Sakamaki into the family during 1974-75, forming a lasting mother-son relationship.

Melva was an avid supporter of high school sports and activities, never missing an opportunity to cheer on her kids. Seven years after Jim's passing, Melva married Jim Peterson on February 19, 1994. Together, they enjoyed dancing, traveling, and living on the farm.

Melva was preceded in death by her husbands Jim Young and Jim Peterson,

her parents William & Sophie Niebuhr, and her siblings Edna Podratz, Esther Sell, Malinda Sell, Lydia Buerkle, Dorothy Kaatz, Ruth Olsen, and Arthur Niebuhr and step-granddaughter Abigail Peterson. She is survived by her children Nancy (Gordon) Ericson, Minneapolis; Linda (Dwight) Sorensen, Bloomington; Terry (Kelly Rae) Young, Eden Prairie; Joel (Julie) Young, Chatfield; Jon (Jonathan Koestler) Young, Atlanta, GA; step-son DuWayne (Shannon) Peterson, Alexandria; and honorary son Masaaki (Hatsue) Sakamaki, Tokyo, Japan; her grandchildren Matt (Carly) Ericson, Sara (Tony) Elizondo, Ben (Melanee) Sorensen, Jill (Elliot) Redmann, Geoff (Brittany) Young, Kara (Jake Dybedahl) Young, Andrew Young, Alecs (Kari) Young, Sophie (Rob) Laures, step-grandchildren Sam (Chrissy) Peterson, Nick Peterson, Mia Peterson, Rob Peterson and Jodi (Brooks) Marti; honorary grandchildren Masayuki and Hiroaki Sakamaki; and her great-grandchildren Aaron (Serena) Elizondo, Emily Elizondo, Mason Ericson, Riley Ericson, Martin Sorensen, Claire Sorensen, Greta Redmann, Maren Redmann, Kaiden Anderson, Leona Young, and Bjorn John-Alexander Laures.

Visitation will be held at 10:00 a.m. at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, 8400 France Ave S, Bloomington, MN on Friday, April 11, 2025, with a funeral service at 11:00 a.m. Melva's cremains will be interred at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery on Monday, April 14th, at 10:30 a.m.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 11. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
8400 France Avenue South
Bloomington, MN 55431

Memorial Service

APR 11. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
8400 France Avenue South
Bloomington, MN 55431

Graveside Service

APR 14. 10:30 AM - 10:45 AM (CT)

Fort Snelling National Cemetery
7601 34th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55450

Tribute Wall



“ *James Windschitl and Sandy Johnson purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Melva Leona Peterson.*



James Windschitl and Sandy Johnson - April 08, 2025 at
10:42 AM