

Marilyn Phyllis Bender

Marilyn Phyllis Graeber was born in Des Moines, IA, June 11, 1931, to Robert ‘Hutch’ Graeber and Mildred Grace Fausch. She was always proud of being born the same year ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ became our National Anthem! Growing up on a farm in Iowa during the Great Depression she learned the value and importance of family, faith, and hard work – lessons that carried her throughout her life.

She attended public school in Sheldahl, IA, graduating in 1948, and graduated from Waldorf Junior College, Forest City, IA, in 1950. It was while attending Waldorf she met her future husband, Robert ‘Bob’ Bender. Marilyn helped cinch the deal while at a college picnic where she jumped off the back of a pickup, calling out, “Catch me, Bob!” He did and they never let go, getting married on May 26, 1951. She taught for two years in McCallsburg, IA, and then set about the serious work of raising a family and making a home wherever Bob led them on numerous moves.

Marilyn always became an important part of her community and her home was known as a welcoming place and second home for all her children’s friends. In addition to keeping track of and supporting her three children, she could be found giving freely of herself at a wide variety of places. She was equally at home as a substitute teacher, Sunday School leader, Cub Scout Den Mother, Girl Scout Leader, and numerous volunteer activities including: Grace Lutheran Church Women, Sturgis Hospital Auxiliary, Fort Meade Museum, 4-Wheelers Jeep Club, Sturgis Area Arts Council, South Dakota Archeological Society, Sturgis Senior Citizens Center, Meals on Wheels, Tuesday Girls, Fort Meade hay rides and holiday parties, and being the unofficial mother, maker of treats, and costumer for an unknown number of high school and community theater stage productions. As the family grew up and moved away, Marilyn became the glue that held everyone together through a constant stream of phone calls, letters, and large packets of newspaper articles on the local happenings in and around Sturgis. Marilyn loved being a grandma. She would always bring special treats for the grandkids, eat lunch with them in the treehouse that Bob built, and take them on grand adventures-even if it was just a hike around the house.

Before being confined to a wheelchair, Marilyn was the primary caregiver for her husband, Bob, during his long battle with dementia. During her years in assisted and nursing care, she was loved by the staff, developed a great fondness for naps (telling us often that she had earned it!), and proudly carried the title of our ‘Queen B’.

Marilyn Bender, age 87, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, August 15, 2018, at Sturgis Regional Senior Care. She is now in the joyful presence of her Lord, Jesus Christ, and reunited with Bob, the love of her life – where she is once again calling out, “Catch me, Bob!”

Marilyn is survived by her three children, Robert (Georgia) Bender, Valley Springs, SD, Randall (Elvira) Bender, Sturgis, SD, and Laurie (Phil) Bangs, Medford, OR; sister, Joyce (John) Hillebo, Polk City, IA; a niece and two nephews; a brother-in-law; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and several cousins.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 64 years, her parents, a brother-in-law, and an infant great-grandson.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that memorials be given to The Fort Meade Museum or the Sturgis Public Library.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com.

In Loving Memory Of



Marilyn Phyllis Bender

1931 ~ 2018



In Loving Memory Of

Marilyn Phyllis Bender

Born

June 11, 1931
Des Moines, Iowa

Died

August 15, 2018
Sturgis, South Dakota

Celebration of Life

Thursday, August 23, 2018, at 10:00 a.m.
Grace Lutheran Church
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiant

Pastor Herbert Cleveland

Accompanist

Carolyn Bobbitt

Soloist

Chris Kaitfors

Musical Selections

“I Need Thee Every Hour” “Amazing Grace”
“Because He Lives” “Going Home”

Pallbearers

Matt Bender ~ Marie Thouron ~ Jeff Thouron
Nell Bender ~ John Trumpe ~ Marlowe Kinkade

Interment

Black Hills National Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that
which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a
time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time
to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time
to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to
lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a
time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a
time of war, and a time of peace.
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

*The family would like to invite you to join them for fellowship and lunch following
committal in the Son Shine room in the church basement. We thank you for your presence
and condolences.*