

Benda Harstad was born on March 4, 1915, on the family farm, rural Wolseth, ND. She was the daughter of John A. and Oline (Wolseth) Harstad, of Selbu, Norway. She was the seventh of ten children, attended Wolseth School until the 11th grade, and graduated from Norwich High School in 1932.

Following her high school graduation, Benda assisted her family with the day-to-day operations of the family farm. She attended Minot State Teachers College in the summer of 1935 with her sister, Tilda. Benda received her Standard Teaching Certificate in 1939.

Her teaching career began in her home district of Margaret Township. She also taught at Rising, Scandia Township, Norwich, Surrey and Roth schools, all in North Dakota. During the summer months, she assisted her father with the operation of the family store and gas station in Minot.

During World War II, Benda entered the Nurse Corp and trained at Trinity School of Nursing. Before completing her training, she married Marvin Olander Sveen, whom she had met while teaching in Scandia Township. They were married on December 29, 1945, at Bethany Lutheran Church, Minot, ND. Benda and Marvin raised seven children on the Sveen homestead located in Scandia Township of Bottineau County, near Roth. Marvin passed away on August 21, 1971. Benda continued to live on the farm until she moved to Minot in 1987. In 2003, she moved into Brentmoor Assisted Living of Minot, where she was lovingly cared for until her death on February 5, 2007.

Benda's faith in the Lord was very strong. Prayer and Bible study were very important to her. She served God and her community by her involvement at Lesje Lutheran Church, Souris Public School, Sons of Norway, and various other groups. After moving to Minot, she was graciously welcomed into First Lutheran Church.

Benda loved to be surrounded by her family and friends. Each one held a special place in her heart. She enjoyed traveling, as she took many trips within the United States and had traveled to Norway three times.

Her loving family includes - children: Margaret (Roger) Nelson, Fargo, Betty Hiatt, Tower City, Oline (David) Kane, Fargo, Clarisse (Charles) Anderson, Minot, Jean (Lyle) Sevre, Wildrose, Marlo (Jane) Sveen, Bismarck, and Kari (Allen) Knudson, Bismarck, 21 grandchildren: Amy (Kurt) Nelson Maslowski, Chad Nelson, Amanda Nelson; Laura (Eric) Hiatt Satrom, Mark (Kristinn) Hiatt, Alicia Hiatt; Brenna Kane, Mackenzie Kane, Jennifer (Jeff) Kane Robinson; Charisse (Paul) Anderson Aslakson, Maria Anderson, Ted Anderson; Jessica Sevre, Logan Sevre; Tom Sveen, Billy Sveen, Inga Sveen; Emily Knudson, Karly Knudson, Britta Knudson, Alissa Knudson; 7 great-grandchildren: Erin Maslowski, Max Maslowski, Benjamin Satrom, Brooke Hiatt, Jacob Hiatt, Luke Robinson, Max Robinson; brother, Alfred (Violet) Harstad, Minot; sister, Lillian (Hans) Sorensen, Fargo, ND; and many precious nieces and nephews of Benda and Marvin.

Benda was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Marvin; siblings, Arnold Harstad, Luella Herman, Manda Ofsthun, Hilma Hughes, Tilda Hjelmstad, Johnnie Harstad, and Olga Mothershead.