

Our dear Mother is at last safe at rest in heaven. For most of her 92 years she cooked and cleaned and baked and sewed and gardened and quilted and canned nineteen hours a day, loving her God and her family with all of her heart and soul and mind and body. At least we hope she's resting a little. She's earned it. Gertrude Naslund died Friday morning, March 23, in her bed at Rosewood on Broadway, where she had lived since October, 2004.

Gertrude was born October 12, 1914, in Webster, SD, to Warnie and Ethel (Philbrook) Cargo. Her family moved to Bantry, ND, where the last of her siblings were born, she was graduated from high school, and she met her future husband, Wesley Cole Naslund.

Gertie and Wesley were married March 5, 1934, in Flint, Michigan. Both their daughters--Janice Lorraine and Coleen Bette--were born before they moved back to North Dakota, settling in Minot, where their only son--Randolph --was born. Gert and Wes spent the rest of their 54 years together in Minot. Their daughter, Jan, married Gale Jennings Blowers; they had 2 sons and 2 daughters and lived nearly their whole lives in Minot. Their daughter, Bette (Nunes), married and moved to the west coast; Bette has a daughter and 2 living sons. Bette's first and youngest sons were each killed in separate car accidents. Their son, Randy, married Ruby (Johnson) of Minot. They live in Fargo; they also have a daughter, 2 living sons and a son who has died.

Gert was primarily a homemaker until she was nearly 40 years old and went to work in the new Sears store at Town & Country. Prior to that she worked for the US Census, as a City Assessor, and had helped Wes in family businesses. She retired from Sears and enjoyed a few years at home, volunteering at Community Action and fixing hair at the nursing homes. After Wes died, in 1988, Gert was 74 years old but didn't care to hang around an empty house, so she went back to work. She was employed through the Green Thumb program. That led her to several new adventures: Gert worked at Jim Hill Junior High, in the library; she worked in the office and in the cafeteria at a couple of Minot grade schools; she worked at the Social Security office and at the Game and Fish Department. She truly enjoyed each of these experiences. She always talked about many of her co-workers and their families as if they were all part of her family. She especially loved the kids. She always especially loved the kids--in and around her life and home.

All her life Gertie was involved at her church in many ways. She cooked for church meals; taught Sunday School and summer Bible School; was active in her circle and involved with her many Church friends. She was also a member of the Eastern Star.

For years Tuesdays were open house days at our house. Her doors were always open but Tuesdays were Gert's day off from Sears. She usually spent the day baking. She had several specialties--different favorites for different people. The best caramel rolls ever came out of her kitchen; nobody made better fudge, or cakes, or cookies, or bread (and there were no bread making machines in those days). All of our friends and occasional strangers would show on Tuesdays. Mother was a model of hospitality. She loved to show her love by putting something happy and special on peoples' plates and in their stomachs. Like the performance artist that she was, she would willingly take requests. One of her goals was to help you grow. If she loved you, chances were she thought you were a little too thin! "Have some more pie!"

Everyone was welcome at Gert's. There was always room for an extra guest. Drop-ins were never a problem. There was great food for everyone. And always enough. Or she'd make more. I hope her friends and our friends and all our relatives enjoyed our home and hearth as much as our Mother enjoyed sharing what she could.

Those times are past times, now. But they're remembered. New times are not the same and a lot of the cooking is not as good. We miss her gifts; we miss her spirit.

Gert was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, her elder daughter, Jan and Jan's dear husband, Gale, her only brother, her youngest sister, three of her precious grandsons, and one infant grand-daughter.

She is survived by her younger daughter, her son and his wife, 13 grandchildren, 24 great grandchildren, and 7 great great-grandchildren, two of her sisters, and one sister-in-law; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.