



Bernadina Cornelia Smith

January 6, 1934 - December 14, 2019

Bernadina, age 85, passed away peacefully on December 14, 2019.

Bernadina was born in Hoog-Keppel, Netherlands, to parents Herman O. Wijers (Wyers) and Catherina Wijers (Wyers) (Melgers). She was the youngest of three children, having an older brother, Nicholas, and sister, Willamenia. World War II had started and it was on May 10, 1940, that the Netherlands became invaded by the Germans. Bernadina was 6 years old and her life changed after that. Her family's home and farm was taken over by the German SS soldiers. They lived side-by-side with the German soldiers and with her mother having to cook meals for them. She has many stories and memories of living under five years of German occupation. After the war ended, her father decided to come to land of opportunity. In July of 1948, when she was 14 years old, her family came over by ship to the United States.

Their first stop was in White Salmon, Washington. Then her family moved to Gervais, Oregon. She graduated from Gervais Union High School in June of 1952. After graduation she joined her family where they had moved, to Tillamook, Oregon, where they had a farm. She then got a job working at the Tillamook Cheese Factory. And it was there she meet her future husband, Harvey. She married Harvey Smith in October of 1953 and they had a double wedding ceremony with her brother Nicholas, and his bride, Jessie.

She became a U.S. citizen on July 1954. She said she wanted to become a U.S. citizen before her first son was born. Son, Harvey Jr. was born late in the year of 1954 and then son Tony was born in 1957. She helped out on her family's farm and taught the boys how to go clamming out in the bay in Tillamook.

Harvey got a job working for Pacific Northwest Bell and the family moved to Corvallis in April of 1966. When the boys got older she help out as Den Mother for their Cub Scout pack. In 1967 she started working for Lipman's Department store for nine years. When Hewlett-Packard came to Corvallis, she got a job there starting around September of 1976 as an electronics production technician. She worked there for 16 years and retired in 1992.

During those retirement years she and Harvey enjoyed traveling in their mini RV and enjoyed listening to polka music and dancing at all the festivals around Oregon. They enjoyed visiting family and friends and traveled to Washington; Canada; Leavenworth, Washington; Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah; Disneyland; Hawaii; taking a cruise to Alaska; and taking three trips back to the Netherlands to visit family and friends. After 48 wonderful years of marriage, her husband Harvey passed away in March of 2001. She then did volunteer work for the American Red Cross blood drive and worked during election times at the Benton County Elections office. In 2003 she took a trip by herself to the Netherlands. She also kept busy doing cross stitching, knitting, crocheting, and making beaded purses.

Around 2004, close family friend John Fruetel started helping Bernadina around her one-acre home and their friendship and love for each other blossomed. And for the next 15 years they became each other's constant companion. John would help out with the care of her property. And with John being a member of the Corvallis Historic Auto Club, they would enjoy going to

all the different car shows and events. One year she was secretary for the club. They would participate in the many parades and festivals around the Willamette Valley especially in the Veteran's Day parade in Albany and the Corvallis Christmas parade. They would take many trips traveling to see family and friends visiting Washington, North Dakota, California, Arizona, taking a cruise to the Bahamas and Alaska, a trip to see her family and friends in the Netherlands together. Mt. Angel Oktoberfest, and the Junction City Scandinavian Festival. She was a founding member of the local Dutch Club and would attend the monthly Dutch luncheons, Oakville Presbyterian Church luncheons. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Corvallis. Every Wednesday night they went to the Morning Star Grange Hall in Millersburg and would listen to the Jefferson Jammers and dance. Anywhere there was accordion and polka music playing Bernadina was there listening and dancing. After Bernadina moved out of her house and into assisted living and then to memory care at Bonaventure of Albany, John would come by every day and have dinner with her and take her out on day trips on the weekends. John became honorary grandfather to her three grandchildren and they have many memories of going to the Central Park listening to the band plays and visiting John at his shop. Tony and Karen are so grateful that John was such a great support and companion to Bernadina all these years and staying by her side and helping support her even when her health was declining. Bernadina said, "How could I ever be so lucky to have two wonderful men in my life that I have loved."

She was preceded in death by her parents, sister, brother and husband, Harvey. She is survived by sons; Harvey Jr. and Tony, daughter-in-law Karen and three grandchildren, Kyle, Melissa and Casey and numerous nieces and nephews. She was a wonderful awesome lady and "Oma" will be dearly missed.

Memorial contributions can be made in her memory to the Alzheimer's Association. A memorial service will be held in her honor at 2 p.m. Saturday, January 11, 2020, at the First Presbyterian Church, Corvallis, Oregon.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 11. 2:00 PM (PT)

First Presbyterian Church
114 SW 8th St
Corvallis, OR 97333

Tribute Wall

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“ *What a very special woman, our pleasure to have known her and Harvey through many polka events, tour to Kimberly Canada, and later Bernadina joined our Hawaii cruise group and she and Joh went with us to Alaska. Loved by all, Missed by everyone. Thank you for sharing your Mom, Dad and John.*



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