



Martha A. Christensen

October 1, 1920 - September 5, 2015

Martha Anna (Rink) Vang Christensen, age 94, of Storm Lake, Iowa passed away at Buena Vista Regional Medical Center, September 5, 2015 surrounded by her family.

Funeral services will be held Sunday, September 13, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Storm Lake. Visitation will take place one hour prior to the service at the church. Burial will be held Monday, September 14, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. at the Wadena Cemetery in Wadena, Minnesota. The Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home in Storm Lake is in charge of the arrangements.

Born on October 1, 1920, Martha was the second of five children born to Herman and Anna (Schlueter) Rink in Pender, Nebraska. Martha grew up on the family farm, eventually earning her teaching degree from Wayne State Teacher's College, located near her home.

On June 1, 1943, Martha married LeRoy Vang. They farmed near Wolbach, Nebraska, where they started their family that would grow to include five daughters. The couple shared an appreciation of nature and delighted their children with various family adventures. In 1948, Martha and LeRoy established a family farm in Hollandale, Minnesota. In 1958, they moved to Walker, MN after purchasing Bayside Resort on Leech Lake in Walker, MN. After three years, they moved to Morris, MN where they owned the Chokio

Locker Plant and Martha taught school in nearby Hancock. In 1965, Martha and LeRoy moved their family to Wadena, Minnesota and on March 4, 1970, LeRoy passed away. Martha returned to college to complete a Bachelor of Science degree at Bemidji State College in 1971. During the 70's, Martha taught at the elementary school in Verndale, not far from Wadena. Her outstanding work as a teacher resulted in receiving the Minnesota Teacher of Excellence award in 1978. Martha was particularly proud of her "Twenty-five Consecutive Years" award from KOPS (Keep Off Pounds Sensibly), one of many organizations where she enjoyed mutual support and friendships.

After retiring in 1980, Martha began spending winters in the desert and canyon surrounds of Sedona, Arizona. Spring and summer months were back in Wadena, Minnesota to garden and write her weekly column, "In the Garden," for Wadena Pioneer Press.

Martha's sister, Helen Christensen, died February 5, 1988. Martha understood the grief and loss felt by Helen's widower, Clayton Christensen. Their friendship blossomed into a loving relationship which enriched both of their lives from the day of their marriage, February 11, 1989 in Storm Lake, Iowa. Clayton and Martha shared interests in gardening, traveling, bird watching, playing cards, as well as pursuing individual artistic endeavors. Throughout their 26 years of marriage, they generously shared their home, entertaining family and friends, foreign exchange students, Rotary exchange students, card clubs. Martha's oil paintings, china and porcelain painting, jewelry, garden produce and homemade soups and bread are a few of the special gifts she shared, but the gift of her encouraging and uplifting spirit will be remembered by all who knew her.

Martha was preceded in death by her first husband, LeRoy Vang; daughter, Judith Vang; parents, Herman and Anna (Schlueter) Rink; sisters, Edna Mass, Helen Christensen; brother, Richard Rink; and two brothers-in-law, Clarence

Mass and Lloyd Sage.

Martha is survived by her husband Clayton; daughters: Linda and husband, Keith Roles of Alexandria, MN; Marion and husband Gary Graham of Hutchinson, MN; Norma Vang of St. Paul, MN; and Brenda Vang and husband James Fittz of Denver, CO. In addition, She is survived by Clayton's daughters: Barbara and husband, Jim Jorgensen of Storm Lake, IA; Dr. Carole Christensen and husband, Dan Peters of Grand Junction, CO; and Diane and husband, Don Bezdicek of Hastings, MN. Martha is also survived by siblings: Esther (Lloyd) Sage of Ogden UT, and Harold (Marilyn) Rink of Pender, NE as well as sister-in-law, Phyllis Rink, and grandchildren: Lisa (Brian) Tonn, Kristi (Joe) Blee, Heather (Rob) Weinmann, Troy (Melanie) Graham, Michael (Tessa) Graham, Christoffer (Sonja) Graham, Ryan (Katie) Bicek, Kevin (Laura) Fittz, Tyler (Tanya) Fittz, Jeff (Jordan) Jorgensen, Chris (Stephanie) Jorgensen, Jessica (Kevin) Denton, Adam Bezdicek, Ryan (Erin) Bezdicek, and Kelly Christensen. Twenty great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild also survive Martha.

Martha, wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother: you leave your loved ones with countless blessings and fun-loving memories. We are all better people because of you. We love you and will miss you dearly!

Memorials may be directed to Sandra J. Schulze American Cancer Society Hope Lodge in Rochester, Minnesota, 411 Second Street NW, Rochester, Minnesota 55901.

Cemetery Details

Wadena Cemetery -- Wadena, MN

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 13. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

St. Mark's Lutheran Church -- Storm Lake
1614 West 5th Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588
<http://www.stmarkstormlake.com/>

Service

SEP 13. 2:00 PM (CT)

St. Mark's Lutheran Church -- Storm Lake
1614 West 5th Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588
<http://www.stmarkstormlake.com/>

Interment

SEP 14. 3:00 PM (CT)

Wadena Cemetery -- Wadena, MN

Tribute Wall



“ *Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Martha A. Christensen*



Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home - September 11, 2015 at 03:34 PM

DS

Beautiful life!

deb starr - September 12, 2015 at 09:18 PM

HA

Beautiful.

Holly Adams - September 15, 2015 at 05:43 PM

ST

What a beautiful family...I have pleasant memories of my time with you in Morris in the 60's. Judy was a special person in my life as well. My love and sympathy for you loss. Sandra Holmen Thompson

Sandra Holmen Thompson - September 15, 2015 at 07:09 PM

JL

“ *I knew Martha from TOPS! She was a nice lady! Very encouraging!*

Joanne Luetkeman - September 14, 2015 at 09:20 PM

KE

“Wow, what a great life lived and a great legacy! Mrs. Vang was my 1st grade teacher. Last week I was rummaging through stuff and came across my report card and her comments written on the back were so insightful and encouraging. I still remember when she took the whole class on a field trip out to her place to see the sights and wander around her yard exploring and having ice cream! She undoubtedly left a mark on the lives of so many, mine for sure! God Bless!

Kathi J Edgell - September 13, 2015 at 04:33 PM

JT

“Jean "Biggins" Toillion lit a candle in memory of Martha A. Christensen



Jean "Biggins" Toillion - September 12, 2015 at 05:15 PM

JT

I watched the video. She seemed like a beautiful lady. So sorry for your loss.

Jean "Biggins" Toillion - September 12, 2015 at 05:15 PM

SE

“Susan Lauritsen Elrod lit a candle in memory of Martha A. Christensen



Susan Lauritsen Elrod - September 11, 2015 at 02:57 PM

DH

“ Martha was a real inspiration, a life long teacher and learner. We had a very good time taking art classes...she was always full of encouragement. A true friend to our family, she will be greatly missed.

Don Hoffmann - September 11, 2015 at 11:44 AM

DW

“ We had fun times in our shady Acres neighborhood and we helped each other out during the tough times. I have a loon picture that Martha painted and a little egg. Blessings for her long life. Love Lane and Donna Waldahl

donna waldahl - September 10, 2015 at 09:42 AM

PT

“ I have known Clayton and Martha for many years. They were such a delightful couple!! They said when they married, they hoped they would have ten years together, and they celebrated over 25!! I was honored to be able to spend many hours with them. We'd laugh about the antics of the squirrels in their yard-they loved their squirrel feeders!! It was fun watching them together...they had their little rituals together, and shared so many laughs! I am blessed to have known them. Such lovely people. Martha, I will miss you! You were such a dear! My thoughts and prayers to Clayton and family. God bless.

Pam Tidemann

Pam Tidemann - September 08, 2015 at 08:16 PM

TW

“ *Trish Winger lit a candle in memory of Martha A. Christensen*



Trish Winger - September 08, 2015 at 01:01 PM

JD

“ *John And Connie (Swenson) Demers lit a candle in memory of Martha A. Christensen*



John and Connie (Swenson) Demers - September 07, 2015 at 08:14 AM