

Mary was born on March 9, 1928, in a farmhouse northwest of Fairmount, ND, and was delivered by her father. She lived a life defined by resilience, generosity, and deep devotion to her family and faith. A longtime and faithful member of the United Church of Christ in Wahpeton, she found strength, purpose, and community within her church family.

Mary dedicated herself to farm life, embracing the hard work, rhythm, and responsibility that came with it. She was known for her handy-woman skills, always ready to fix, build, or create whatever was needed. Most of all, she devoted herself to her family, who were the center of her world.

Throughout her life, one constant was the lake. In 1980, she purchased a cottage on Deer Lake, Minnesota, which quickly became the heart of countless family summers. The cottage was filled with her beloved Garfield and loon collections, each piece a reflection of her humor and the things she cherished. She loved catching “sunnies” and frying them up — simple moments that became treasured memories. The lake cottage grew into a true family haven, a place where stories were shared, laughter echoed, and memories were made that will be forever held close.

Mary found joy in life's simple pleasures. She especially loved watching The Lawrence Welk Show every Sunday evening, a tradition she looked forward to each week. In her younger years, she was an avid roller skater and cherished the fun and friendships that came with it.

She will be remembered for her beautiful quilt making, a craft through which she poured love, patience, and creativity. Her grandchildren will forever treasure the sweet treats she always had waiting for them, a tradition that made every visit feel special. Those who knew her best will remember her go-getting personality, a spirited determination that carried her through every season of life.

Mary was preceded in death by her husbands, Daniel Gill (1977) and Robert Smith (2020); her parents, Loren and Elsie (Krause) Manock; her son, Jim Gill (2022); her daughter, Karen Bakken (2024); her siblings, Agnes Manock, Nathan Manock, Elaine Hubrig, George Manock, Lucille Miranowski, Lloyd Manock, Melvin Manock, and Marvin Manock; and her half-brother, Arthur Manock, and half-sister, Viola Miles.

Mary is survived by her daughter, Char Speidel; her sons, Jerry Gill and his wife Cynthia, David Gill; and her sister, Alice Buchholz. She is also survived by her grandchildren: Shelley Ugarte, Kyle Speidel, Cassie Foltz; Tim Bakken, Michele Graves, Jodi Bakken; Jon, Matt, and Jay Gill; Jason and Adam Gill; Chris Gill, Jennifer Pallas, and Josh Gill. In addition, she leaves behind many great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, all of whom will carry her memory with love.





Mary Nellie Smith



Born

March 9, 1928 | Fairmount, North Dakota

Passed Away

May 8, 2026 | Fargo, North Dakota

Age

98 Years | 1 Month | 30 Days

Funeral Service

11:00 AM | Thursday, May 14, 2026
Vertin-Munson Funeral Home | Wahpeton, North Dakota

Officiant

Pastor Ken Adams

Readers

Dave Gill | Don Gill

Music

Violinist - Isaac Gamez, Great-grandson
Solo - Jon Gill, Grandson
Special Music - Dan Gill | Jerry Gill | Dave Gill | Jim Gill

Honorary Pallbearers

All of Mary's Grandchildren

Interment at a Later Date

Fairview Cemetery | Wahpeton, North Dakota

*I am standing up on the seashore. A ship at my side spreads
her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean.
She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch her
until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where
the sea and sky come together to mingle with each other.*

Then someone at my side says:

"There, she is gone!"

"Gone where?"

*Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast and
hull and spar as she was when she left my side and she is
just as able to bear her load of living freight to her destined port.*

*Her diminished size is in me, not in her. And just as the
moment when someone at her side says: "There, she is gone!"*

*There are other eyes watching her coming, and other
voices ready to take up the glad shout: "Here she comes!"*

And that is dying. . .