

Why God Made Teachers

By Kevin William Huff

*When God created teachers,
He gave us special friends
To help us understand His world
And truly comprehend
The beauty and the wonder
Of everything we see,
And become a better person
With each discovery.
When God created teachers,
He gave us special guides
To show us ways in which to grow
So we can all decide
How to live and how to do
What's right instead of wrong
To lead us so that we can lead
And learn how to be strong.
Why God created teachers,
In His wisdom and His grace,
Was to help us learn to make our world
A better, wiser place.*



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF



Shirley Delores Ruud

May 15, 1933 - December 4, 2025





*I Said A Prayer
For You Today*

*I said a prayer for you today,
not in the hush of chapel walls,
but in the quiet breath between
the turning of the world and dawn.*

*I asked the wind to carry peace
like soft rain over your weary hours,
and for the sun to lay its gold
upon your shoulders without weight.*

*I asked the day to guard your steps,
to place small joys along your path—
a bird's bright call, a stranger's smile,
the scent of bread from an open door.*

*And when the night folds in its wings,
I prayed the stars would keep their watch,
and that your dreams would open wide
to fields where sorrow cannot follow.*



*Remembering
Shirley Ruud*

May 15, 1933 - December 4, 2025

Memorial Service

Monday, August 3, 2026 - 11:00 AM
First Lutheran Church - Fargo, North Dakota

Pastor Marty Tollefson, *Officiant*

Naomi Wawers, *Vocalist*

Bill Tweten, *Accompanist*

Alex Rydell, *Violinist*

Congregational Hymns

"What A Friend We Have In Jesus" #439

"Beautiful Savior" #518

Special Music

"His Eye Is On The Sparrow" "The Lord's Prayer"

"Sæterjentens Søndag"

Honorary Pallbearers

Shirley's nieces and nephews, all family and friends
present, and all of her former students

Interment

Sunset Memorial Gardens - Fargo, North Dakota

All are invited to a luncheon following the service.

Shirley Delores Ruud, 92, of Fargo, ND, passed away on Thursday, December 4, 2025, with her daughter by her side at Sanford Fargo Hospice House after having recently suffered a stroke.

Quietly modest and humble, Shirley valued relationships above all else, and treated everyone she met, whether friend or stranger, with genuine care. Guided by her faith, she lived with gratitude and was known for her steady positivity and encouraging words. Even at 92, she remained vibrant and independent, living fully on her own terms-mowing, raking, shoveling, gardening, and managing her home with the same determination and grace that defined her life.

Shirley Delores Strand was born on May 15, 1933, in Abercrombie, ND, to Clarence and Viola (Johnson) Strand, the youngest of four daughters. She grew up on a farm and attended country school, later moving into Abercrombie. She was baptized and confirmed at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and graduated from Abercrombie High School in 1950, where she excelled in academics and basketball. She entered her first two years of an Elementary Education degree at Valley City State University, and began her career as a teacher in two-room schoolhouses in Barrie and Goshen, North Dakota. She completed her four-year teaching degree at Moorhead State University (now Minnesota State University Moorhead), and from 1954-1997, Shirley passionately and lovingly taught Kindergarten, First and Second grades in the Fargo Public Schools (Washington, Roosevelt, and Longfellow). Shirley continued taking classes throughout her career to maintain her certification and to improve upon her teaching methods to better serve her students' academic, social and emotional needs. Her students were dear to her, and she took great joy in watching them grow both in and beyond the classroom. Long after her students left her classroom, Shirley continued to support them-attending their musical performances, sporting events, graduation parties, and milestones of every kind. Following her students' paths and reconnecting with them over time brought her immense happiness. If you were her student, there was certainly a picture, note, artwork, graduation notice, newspaper clipping, or gift of yours still in her possession! Shirley also deeply valued her colleagues with whom she taught, appreciating their friendship, dedication, and shared commitment to their students. Through Shirley's guidance and love for education, she inspired her daughter to follow in her footsteps and become a teacher, a bond and profession they shared with pride.

On August 3, 1957, she married Richard Ruud of Fargo, ND, at First Lutheran Church in Fargo, where they continued to live, work, and build community until their deaths. Richard and Shirley enjoyed many trips, dinner and dancing outings, and visits to spend time with their sisters' families, before the birth of their daughter Kristin. Shirley was devoted to her role as a wife, mother, and grandmother. She lovingly supported Richard through many health challenges until his passing in March 2007. Her daughter feels incredibly fortunate with her meaningful life shaped by the lessons Shirley taught, the opportunities she provided, and her unconditional love. Her grandsons, Benjamin and Samuel, knew her as a loving and proud grandmother, whose guidance and support they will always carry with them. They enjoyed her visits to New Jersey and looked forward to their time with her each summer in North Dakota. Shirley also greatly appreciated her son-in-law Julio's care and kindness, his hard work at her home when visiting, and the joy he brought to her family,

Shirley's faith and church were an important part of her life. She often recounted stories about her Sunday School and Confirmation lessons and teachers in Abercrombie, and she felt blessed with her church home at First Lutheran.

She cherished both the traditional and celebration services, finding deep meaning in the message and great joy in the music. She shared her gifts generously, teaching Vacation Bible School and serving at Fellowship preparing those delicious Lutheran Church Basement Ladies' ham salad, chicken salad, cinnamon swirl bread and cheese spread open-faced sandwiches topped with an olive, and her cakes topped with her signature frosting and toasted coconut. If not able to make it to service on Sunday, Shirley was sure to listen to the radio broadcast of First Lutheran and to watch worship from Messiah Lutheran Church.

Through the years, Shirley delighted in welcoming family and friends into her home. Planning delicious meals, setting a beautiful table, and enjoying lively conversation brought her great joy. She looked forward to hosting her special potluck, birthday, and bridge groups, cherishing the laughter and connection these gatherings of close friends brought. When invited to events in homes or at the lake, Shirley often shared her famous baked beans, three-bean salad, date bread, gumdrop and lemon bars, and blueberry and rhubarb pies.

Shirley treasured living in Fargo, appreciating the educational and cultural opportunities the city offered. She attended as many music, dance and theater events as she could, marveling at the talent in the productions and the sense of community they provided. Shirley's love of music extended beyond attending performances. She played the piano at home and at school for her students, enjoying hymns, patriotic tunes, and popular songs from the 1930s and 1940s, and she never missed a musical program (nor the broadcasts of the Twins and Bison games, and local and world news), especially Lawrence Welk on television.

Above all, Shirley cherished her foundation of family, holding close to her Johnson and Strand sides throughout her life. She maintained loving relationships with cousins, aunts, uncles, and her beloved sisters' and sisters-in-law's families, and treasured her roots growing up in Abercrombie, along with the traditions and celebrations of her Norwegian heritage which she continued throughout her life. Family, friend and neighbor bonds remained central to her heart. In this same spirit of devotion, Shirley lovingly looked after her sister Ruth, faithfully visiting her at a local care facility, and tending to her needs with love and diligence, including managing her affairs for the past nine years.

Shirley is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Kristin Ruud-Diaz and Julio Diaz, and grandsons Benjamin and Samuel Diaz, North Bergen, NJ; sister, Ruth Strand, Fargo, ND (formally of Los Angeles, CA); nephews, David (Jane) Schuldheisz, MN; John (Paula) Schuldheisz, TX; Paul Schuldheisz, MN; Peter (Kari) Schuldheisz, MN; Mark (Teresa) McGuigan, ND; Daniel McGuigan, ND; Cory (Judy) Houseman, MN; Steven Noel, IL; nieces Nancy (David) Reigle, CO; Kathleen (Vince) Ganglehoff, ND; Fern Ollerenshaw, MN; and Laura Noel-Braun, FL; and many great and great-great-nieces and nephews, as well as several cousins and their children for whom she cared deeply.

Shirley was preceded in death by her parents; husband; sisters and brothers-in-law Ardelle and Russell Schuldheisz, Fayma and Melvin Dan McGuigan; sisters and brother-in-law Joyce Noel, and Donna and Frederick "Bud" Houseman; parents-in-law, Leonard and Eunice Ruud, and Alphid Ruud; and special cousin Donata Nellermeoe.

Shirley's family appreciates the compassionate care she was given by her doctors, nurses and their staff at Sanford Medical Center and Sanford Hospice House the last week of her life, as well as the support to her daughter during that time.

In lieu of flowers, the family invites memorials according to the wishes of the sender to the First Lutheran Church Foundation, Fargo Public Schools, Concordia College, Valley City State University, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Sanford Hospice House, or the New Life Center.