

Billie F. (Leonard) Smith, age 91, passed away peacefully after a long, richly blessed life dedicated to family, faith, and community.

Born on December 12, 1934, in Wakefield, NE, to James and Frances (Lindahl) Leonard, Billie grew up with a deep appreciation for music, education, and rural fellowship. She graduated from Wayne High School in 1952, playing in both the marching and concert bands. Billie attended Wayne State College for three years, performing with the marching band and symphony orchestra, swimming with the Dolphin Synchronized Swimming team, and joining honoraries Tau Beta Sigma, Sigma Tau Delta, and Pi Gamma Mu.

While working as a lifeguard at the Pender Pool in the summer of 1954, Billie met Richard D. Smith. In 1955, the two were joined in marriage. Together, they built a decades-long partnership with deep roots in Thurston County, Nebraska. For many years, they successfully farmed the land—raising crops, a stock cow herd, feeder and fat cattle, silage, and running a hog confinement and milk cow enterprise. They also owned and operated the Locker Plant in Thurston. Billie supported their operations by selling Pioneer Seed for 31 years, later entering a farming partnership with her son, Jeffrey. Dedicated to public service, she served on the County Extension Service Board and as the interim Postmaster for Thurston.

Billie's faith was her cornerstone. As a longtime member of St. Luke Lutheran Church in Emerson, Nebraska, she taught Sunday School, served on the Church Council, and was president, secretary, and a State Convention delegate for the Women of the ELCA. She was deeply honored to break ground for the church's new social hall. Upon moving to Minnesota, she joined Calvary Lutheran Church in Perham.

An energetic community member, Billie enjoyed the Couples Pitch Club and Better Home Club in Nebraska. In Minnesota, she became a fixture in local Bridge Clubs and volunteered with the Minnesota Reading Corps, tutoring elementary students at the Heart of the Lakes Elementary School in Perham. Billie and Richard shared an adventurous spirit, traveling in their 5th-wheel trailer to camp in Nebraska and Minnesota, and wintering in Surprise, AZ, and Pharr and Rockport, TX. They took advantage of having Balmoral Golf Course in Battle Lake as their back yard and enjoyed many rounds of golf. Billie loved the water, fishing on the Missouri River and various lakes, and embarking on approximately 15 cruises, many which included family members.

Billie was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Richard Smith; son, Jeffrey W. Smith, daughter-in-law, Carol (Carpenter) Smith; sister, Joan (Don) Colligan; brother, Paul Leonard and grandson, Wade Hoar.

Her legacy lives on in her surviving family: her daughter, Julie (Mark) Hoar; grandchildren, Ashley (Dustin) Formanack, Shay Hoar and Amber (Darrin) Little; great grandchildren, Carter Wade Samek, Zoey and Ellie Formanack; sister-in-law, Karen Leonard; and many beloved nieces, nephews, extended family, and friends.



I N L O V I N G *Memory*



Billie F. Smith

December 12, 1934 ~ June 1, 2026

Mothers Never Die

You have never lost your mother,

Though you've said your last good-byes,
Though there's heartbreak in the parting

No one's mother ever really dies.

If you love to hear the old songs,
For memories they bring,
It's because you had a mother

Who taught your heart to sing.

If you stop to help a neighbor
Search your heart and you will find,
It's because you had a mother,

Who taught you to be kind.

If you go to church when weary
Seeking God to guide your way,
It's because you had a mother,

Who taught you how to pray.

No, you've never lost your mother
Though you've said your last good-byes
Through your thoughts and deeds she's living

No one's mother really dies.

Prayer Service

Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

Schoeneberger Funeral &

Cremation Service

Perham, Minnesota

Officiated by

Pastor Erin Bovendam

Interment

Saturday, June 13, 2026

St. Mark's Lutheran Cemetery

Pender, Nebraska

