

**M**ary Ann Swenson was born on February 26, 1933, at Sioux Valley Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to John Peter and Genevieve (Sigdestad) Swenson. As a young girl, she attended Grade School District 45 and graduated as valedictorian from Jasper High School in 1951. From an early age, Mary Ann knew she wanted to be a nurse. She received a one-semester scholarship to St. Olaf College, then completed her nursing education at Sioux Valley, becoming a Registered Nurse. After graduating, she began her career at the South Dakota State Hospital in Yankton. She was soon recruited by Dr. Suckow to return to Garretson, where she worked for seven years. Later, Dr. Vandemark invited her to become his scrub nurse. Mary Ann felt called to serve her country after seeing many Army ads in nearly every nursing magazine that read "WE NEED YOU". In 1966, she answered the U.S. Army's call to duty and enlisted in the United States Army Nurse Corps. She completed a 12-week orientation at Fort Sam Houston in Texas and was then stationed at Fitzsimons Army Medical Center as a First Lieutenant. When she had just six months left of her two-year enlistment, she received orders to serve in Vietnam. She was promoted to Captain stationed at South China Beach "91st Evacuation Hospital" in Tuy Hoa.

True to her South Dakota farm roots, she lived by the motto: "Don't quit—stay," and "The Lord is with me." In the winter of 1969, she was transferred to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where she remained for three years before pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Nebraska, completing it in just 13 months. She then served at the Combat Support Hospital at Fort Riley, where she was promoted to Major. In 1977, Mary Ann was stationed in Hawaii as a Lieutenant Colonel, overseeing clinics for three years. Her military service also took her to Fort Hood (TX), Fort Sheridan (IL), Fort McClellan (AL), and Walter Reed in Washington, D.C. While serving in pediatrics at Walter Reed, she was promoted to the rank of Colonel. During her 26 years of service in the Army Nurse Corps, Mary Ann received numerous medals and commendations. One of her most cherished honors was the "Order of Aaron and Hur," the highest award given by the Army Chief of Chaplains. Mary Ann's deep Christian faith guided her life. She rarely missed a church service and strived to live as Jesus taught. Following her retirement from the military in 1993, she returned to South Dakota, but her service didn't end there. She continued to serve her community as a volunteer nurse at Sanford Hospital and fellow veterans at the Sioux Falls VA for another 26 years. Mary Ann deeply valued time with her family, friends, and church community. She also had a great love for music—singing with the South Dakota Symphony Choir and playing clarinet with the Blowhards of Jasper, MN, and the New Horizons Band.

She is survived by her nieces and nephews, Sandy (Sanjay) Eide of Clermont, FL, Scott Swenson of CO, Kevin (Cheryl) Swenson of Sherman, SD, Cindy (Mike) McCormack of Omaha, NE, Jackie Lawrence of NE, Debbie (Scott) McCart of SD, Paula Deuchars of Sioux Falls, SD, Barbra Kirchner of Tea, SD, Jon Swenson of Sherman, SD, Michele (David) Jones of Pipestone, MN, Lisa Swenson of Sioux Falls, SD, Sharon Deuchars of Payson, AZ; many great nieces and nephews; and God daughter, Kristi (Greg) Staton of Sioux Falls, SD.

Mary Ann was preceded in death by her parents, John and Genevieve Swenson; brothers, Edward Swenson, Johan "Joe" (Marilyn) Swenson, Marvin (Charlotte) Swenson; sisters, Pearl Deuchars and Evangeline Lawrence; nephews, Brett Deuchars and Mark Swenson; and niece, Sherri Lawrence.

# *In Loving Memory Of* **Mary Ann Swenson**

February 26, 1933 ~ July 20, 2025

## **Memorial Services**

10:30 AM Saturday, July 26, 2025  
Highland Lutheran Church  
Sherman, South Dakota

## **Officiating**

Rev. Sue Hodne

## **Organist**

Ruth Hoiland

## **Congregational Hymns**

"Amazing Grace" green hymnal  
"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" WOV hymnal  
"I Know That My Redeemer Lives" green hymnal

## **Honorary Bearers**

Lucas Deuchars Patrick Kirshner Kallie Heineman  
Alysia (Matt) Juhl Danika Juhl Morgan Swenson

Her Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Arms

## **South Dakota Nurse Honor Guard**

Nightingale Tribute

## **Inurnment**

Highland Lutheran Cemetery  
Sherman, South Dakota

## **Military Honors**

Henry G. Fix Post No. 23  
The American Legion  
Garretson, South Dakota

## **Presenting Flag**

Members of the United States Army  
Ft. Carson, CO

## **Taps**

Nathan Staton

## *Nurse's Prayer*

*Give to my heart, oh Lord  
compassion and understanding.*

*Give to my hands skill and tenderness.*

*Give to my ears the ability to listen.*

*Give to my lips words of comfort.*

*Give to me Lord..*

*strength for this selfless service*

*and enable me to give hope*

*to those I am called to serve.*

*Amen*

*Mary Ann's family would like to invite you to a meal  
in the basement of the church following the  
committal service at the cemetery.*



## *In Memory*



**Colonel  
Mary Ann Swenson**

February 26, 1933 † July 20, 2025