



Nora Belle Sannes

December 5, 1927 - February 18, 2025

Nora's service is viewable at <https://vimeo.com/1079150194>

Heaven welcomed one beautiful, intelligent, classy lady when Nora Belle (Whitman) Sannes quietly passed on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at age 97. Her Celebration of Life will be 2:00 p.m. Saturday, April 26, 2025, at First United Methodist Church, Fargo, ND.

Nora was born in 1927 in rural Robinson, ND to Jay P. and Lena Whitman and was raised on a small farm. She spent a happy childhood playing with three sisters, helping with farm chores and often hiding away to read a book.

Nora's formal education began in a one-room country school located half a mile from the farm. Nora walked to school along a prairie trail that bordered a fenced pasture and had fond memories of being serenaded by meadowlarks "sitting on every fence post". High school was in the nearby town of Robinson and Nora graduated as valedictorian in 1943 at age 16.

After attending Valley City State Teacher's College, Nora began her career as an elementary school teacher and spent the next seven years teaching in the small North Dakota towns of Kiev, Drake and Robinson. The Robinson School Superintendent saw something special in Nora and played matchmaker for his younger brother, Leonard Emil Sannes, a farmer living in Barnes County, ND.

Wedding bells rang for Nora and Leonard on September 1, 1951.

Nora's career as a farmer's wife brought many changes including having to learn to cook more than chocolate chip cookies, learning to run a combine and raising three children, Gerry, Colleen and Corinne. Nora's years as a farmer's wife were filled with raising beautiful flowers, leading the Grand Prairie Township Livewires 4-H Club, getting involved in the township's Homemaker's Club, and touring the state as a speaker for the Christian Women's Club.

Nora was passionate about her Christian faith and found a spiritual home in the United Methodist Church. She lived its core belief that being a Christian obligated her to love all others because God first loved her. While on the farm, Nora was active in Salem United Methodist Church in rural Valley City.

Nora and Leonard retired from farming and moved to Fargo in 1984. Nora did not understand how a city housewife could stay busy, so she gladly accepted a job offer from their realtor. She enjoyed many things about her new career, but especially the fact that she got to dress up for work.

Nora and Leonard shared 24 busy years in Fargo. They joined First United Methodist Church and Nora sang in the choir, joined a Circle and served on several committees. Her favorite activity, however, was playing an integral role in raising her first granddaughter, Chrissy. Chrissy was key to Nora staying forever young.

In 2007, at age 80, Nora retired from Advantage Realty with a closet full of suits and high heels. One year later, Nora was widowed. She spent her final decades being "Super Nana" to the four children of her granddaughter, Chrissy Koland. William Leonard Finn, Emilia Belle Finn, James Patrick Koland, and Adelaide Nora Koland, all from Fargo-Moorhead, benefitted from her love and wisdom. Nora also fulfilled her long-deferred dream of traveling,

enjoying trips to both coasts, several visits to see her daughter in Las Vegas and 4 memorable family trips to Kauai.

Her parents, beloved husband, three sisters and seven nieces and nephews preceded her in death. Left to celebrate her life are her three children, Gerry Sannes, Fargo; Colleen (TJ) Rice, Las Vegas, NV; Corinne Durensky, Barnesville, MN; granddaughter Chrissy (Jeremy) Koland, Fargo; grandson Ian (Jacklyn) Anderson, Fargo; step-grandson Darrin Anderson, West Fargo; eight great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel of Valley City. The family suggests that memorials be given to First United Methodist Church of Fargo.

Previous Events

A Celebration of Life

APR **26**. 2:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church - Fargo, ND
906 1st Ave S
Fargo, ND 58103

Tribute Wall



“ *View and Download the Funeral Program*

Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel - October 14, 2025 at 12:02 PM



“ *Oliver - Nathan Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Nora Belle Sannes*



Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel - April 28, 2025 at 10:19 AM

KJ

“ *So sorry I couldn't be there today but wanted to share this picture, it is a very fond memory for me. I was visiting my mom and dad, Ward and Edith Whitman, when Nora, Alpha and Brownie dropped in back in 2014. It was delightful to see the cousins together, I only wish my photography skills were better, Alpha is a bit lost in the shadows. Whoever wrote the tribute to Nora did an amazing job, it portrays her exactly as I will always remember her. God Bless!!!*



Kay Jongsma - April 26, 2025 at 02:03 PM

RD

“ *Nora was a special lady to everyone that new her.*



RoxAnne DeKrey - April 24, 2025 at 07:19 PM

LP

“ *I have so many memories of being included in your family when I was little. Nora always welcomed me with kindness, patience and love. I'm so sorry I won't be able to come to her service. Hugs and condolences to each of you.*

Lori Peterson

Leora Peterson - April 23, 2025 at 05:45 PM

LF

“ *Lori & Corey Wikstrom and family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Nora Belle Sannes.*



Lori & Corey Wikstrom and family - April 22, 2025 at 08:36 PM

PO

“ *On behalf of the county 4-H program and the homemakers of tomorrow
sincere sympathy to Nora's family she made a difference in the lives
of many young people and ladies in the community. May the memories
you share be a blessing of comfort in the days to come.*

Phyllis Otterness - February 23, 2025 at 06:50 PM

LH

“ One can only remember dear Nora with fondness and a smile. She was such a soft spoken, kind, gentle woman, that you respected and knew she could mean business if she needed to. Thank you for the wonderful obituary, and thankful she had such a full life - on and off the farm. Our sincere condolences to Gerry, Colleen, & Corinne, and of course Chrissy and all of Nora's family. Lynn Hill & Guy

Lynn Hill - February 21, 2025 at 11:50 AM

LP

Colleen, Gerry, Corinne and family, I have such wonderful memories of Nora, I often refer to her as my second mom when I share stories of time spent with Colleen. She helped guide me through my childhood spending many weekends out at the farm with my best friend. We had so much fun together. One memory that I remember was me pulling all of her delicious carrots out of her prized garden. Apparently they weren't ready to be pulled!!!
But, she never got upset with me that I can remember.
She was a wonderful 4-H leader guiding many of us to State competitions at the ND State fair in Minot.
Thank you Nora for all of your love and kindness and including me as one of your family.
Hugs and prayers,
Lori Lutz Peterson

Leora Peterson - February 21, 2025 at 03:19 PM

BD

Nora was my 4-H leader. one memory I have is going to their house for a fun afternoon of sledding, and the hot coco she made was delicious, because it was homemade, from scratch! My sincere sympathy to the Sannes family!

Beth Byberg Dreher.

Beth Byberg Dreher - February 22, 2025 at 03:34 PM

JM

I am so very sorry for your loss. Nora was the best cook, and a wonderful relative. Many happy memories.

Jamie McDowell - February 24, 2025 at 09:50 PM