



Alvina J. Smuda

June 13, 1933 - April 3, 2024

Alvina J. Smuda, 90 year old resident of Little Falls, MN, passed away Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at St. Gabriel's Hospital in Little Falls, MN. A Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11:00 AM on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Little Falls, MN with Father Ben Kociemba officiating. Burial will be at the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Cemetery in Little Falls. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service on Wednesday at the church. Caring for Alvina and her family is the Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, MN.

Alvina Smuda was born on June 13, 1933 in Little Falls, MN to the late Thomas Smuda and Leatha (Starkey) Smuda. She was raised in Little Falls by her grandparents, Peter and Tillie (Lisinski) Smuda. When they passed away Frank and Louise Smuda, Alvina's aunt and uncle took over her care at the age of 10. Alvina attended Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School. She graduated from school in the 8th grade and stayed home to work on the farm. One summer in 1965, her uncle Frank, her brother Ben and his wife Alice took Alvina to visit Bambiland in Brainerd MN. Alvina wanted to buy a pet deer. Her uncle said, "No, it costs too much." Alvina cried all the way home and wouldn't talk to anyone. The next day they all pooled their money and went back to buy two European deer. They showed people the deer and someone told them they should start a zoo. Starting in 1966, Louise and Frank purchased other animals and started Smuda's Zoo on 27 acres along Pike Creek on the west

side of Little Falls. Alvina was always helping run the zoo, doing chores, helping visitors and taking care of the animals all year round. Alvina shared her passion and love for animals with numerous families and children around Morrison County. She also enjoyed making crafts to sell at the zoo store. The deer held a special place in Alvina's heart, but another animal got special attention in the house, Gretchen the lioness. Gretchen lived in the house until she was 80 pounds then was moved outside. Gretchen wasn't the only animal in the house. Monkey's, birds and cats were all welcome. Alvina continued to stay active with the zoo until it closed in 1991. She also worked at the Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum. Her brother Ben and his wife Alice moved back to Little Falls in 1997 to spend time with Alvina. They enjoyed many peaceful days observing wildlife. Alvina enjoyed telling stories about the zoo, getting a good laugh by telling a joke and poking a little fun at others. A highlight of her day would be when a neighbor stopped by to talk. After Ben passed, Alvina enjoyed going with Alice to volunteer at Bethel Lutheran Church with garage sales and bulletin folding.

Alvina is survived by her sister-in-law, Alice Smuda, several cousins and many close friends.

She was preceded in death by her brother, Ben Smuda; parents, grandparents, uncle, Frank Smuda; aunts, Louise Smuda, Frances Smuda; great-aunt, Pauline Smuda.

Cemetery Details

Our Lady Of Lourdes Cemetery

Highway 27
Little Falls, MN 56345

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 10. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Church
208 West Broadway
Little Falls, MN

Mass of Christian Burial

APR 10. 11:00 AM (CT)

Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Church
208 West Broadway
Little Falls, MN

Tribute Wall



“ *Lemieur Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of
Alvina J. Smuda*



Lemieur Funeral Homes - April 08, 2024 at 03:38 PM

CM

“ *Claudette Moran lit a candle in memory of
Alvina J. Smuda*



Claudette Moran - April 11, 2024 at 03:06 PM

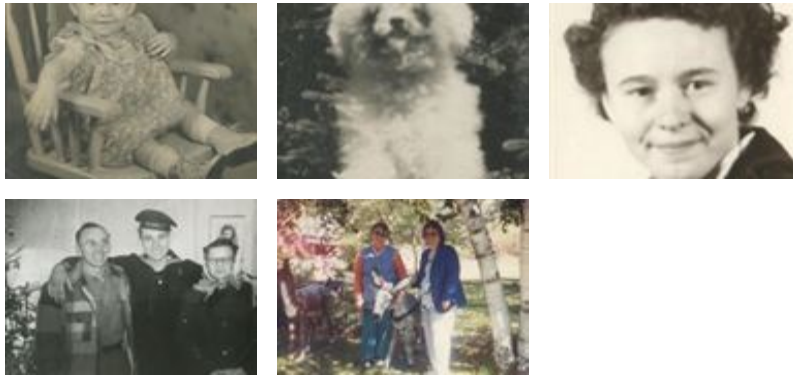
TH

“ I have many good memories of Smuda's Zoo, and Alvina particularly. I lived near the zoo, a couple miles south. As a kid, I remember riding my bike past the zoo and hearing all sorts of animal sounds, most notably, the lions! All the Smudas were always very friendly and kind, especially Alvina. As a kid, on Halloween, we always stopped at the zoo and Alvina would be glad to see us and ask what was new in our lives. That was one of our favorite stops. Later, when I had my own kids, we continued the tradition of stopping at the zoo for Halloween, and Alvina would always remember me, smile her big smile, and insist on giving me some Halloween candy too, just for old times sake! She was a great lady with a big heart! I pray that God will take good care of her. My sincere sympathies to the remaining family. Tom Hanowski

Tom Hanowski - April 09, 2024 at 10:39 PM



“ 76 files added to the album Life Tributes



Lemieur Funeral Homes - April 08, 2024 at 11:14 AM



“ Alice sorry for your loss.



Karen Haaland - April 08, 2024 at 07:48 AM

JR

“ We enjoyed many years having Alvina, Alice and her family as neighbors. The girls were treated with treats and stories of the zoo. Always be respected by the Ringwelski family.



Jim and Joyce Ringwelski - April 05, 2024 at 11:11 AM

JR

“ Joyce Ringwelski purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Alvina J. Smuda.



Joyce Ringwelski - April 05, 2024 at 11:01 AM

KI

“ It was always a joy to visit with Alvina at the Zoo or when she came up to the Museum.



Kim - April 04, 2024 at 09:56 PM



“ *Judy Berger lit a candle in memory of Alvina J. Smuda*



Judy Berger - April 04, 2024 at 08:55 PM



“ *Rich And Wendy Waltman sent a virtual gift in memory of Alvina J. Smuda*



Rich and Wendy Waltman - April 04, 2024 at 05:28 PM