



**K**atherine Margaret Michael Smalley, loving mother and wife, and friend to many, left us to be with the Lord on September 3, 2009 at the age of 92. She passed away in her sleep due to congestive heart failure. The Bozeman Deaconess Hospice cared for her the last ten days of her life at her home at Springmeadows Assisted Living Facility.

She was born on February 17, 1917, in Billings and spent her first 15 years on a small farm in the Hardin area with five sisters and three brothers. Her parents, George and Maria Michael were ethnic Germans who had emigrated to America from the Volga River area in Russia in 1906. Those farm years were character-building for Katherine where she became well-acquainted with long hours of hard work. Under the guidance of her mother and two older sisters, she became an excellent cook and knew the secrets of many old-country recipes.

In 1933, Katherine was employed by a local family as nanny for their daughter, Jeanne. She and the family traveled to Los Angeles that year, Katherine's first trip out of Montana. It was a most memorable one, with Katherine telling tales over the next 70 years of Jeanne's antics. She didn't like Los Angeles. She said, "It was always raining."

On June 1st, 1935, she and a girlfriend attended a dance at a Billings dance hall where she was introduced to one of the musicians. Three-and-a-half weeks later, on June 26th, she and Dudley Smalley were married. She found out later that one of Dudley's friends had whispered, "Better grab this one, Dudley. She knows how to cook." Their marriage lasted 55 years until Dudley's passing in February of 1990.

Katherine was an energetic woman who loved to cook and garden. She delighted her husband and son with old-fashioned cinnamon rolls, sugar cookies, and banana-cream pies. Her specialty was sour-cream raisin pie. Her garden was always a source of pride, and she gardened whenever possible. Her dill and bread-and-butter pickles were favorites everywhere. She especially enjoyed using her artistic talent working and teaching in craft stores, and making many quilts for her family and friends.

She was a member of Billings Friendship Chapter No.124, Order of the Eastern Star, and of Bath Zabbia Temple No. 21, Daughters of the Nile. She sang in both organizations' choirs. She will long be remembered for supporting their bake sales with sour-cream raisin pies and banana cream pies, both setting record highs at the bake-sale auctions.

Katherine is survived by her son, Vern, and daughter-in-law, Karen, of Bozeman, her grandchildren and their spouses, Kristine Austin and Rick of San Jose, California, and Douglas Smalley and Carol of Culloden, Georgia, and four great-grandchildren, Cutter, Chandra and Christian Smalley and Mateo Austin. Also surviving are a sister, Martha Milhausen and her husband, Lloyd, of Lodi, California, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorial services will be at St. James Episcopal Church in Bozeman, Thursday, September 17th at 10:30 a.m., and at First United Congregational Church of Billings on Saturday, September 19th at 2 p.m. Receptions will follow both services. Her ashes will be buried at Fairview Cemetery in Hardin, Saturday, the 19th, at 10 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions be made in Katherine's honor to Yellowstone Boys' and Girls' Ranch at 1732 South 72nd Street West, Billings, MT 59106.