



## Evelyn Agnes Bertsche

July 26, 1936 - October 22, 2020

Evelyn Agnes (Dyck) Bertsche, 84, died on October, 22, 2020, in Normal, Illinois at the McLean County Nursing Home.

Evelyn's remains will be interred at Ropp Cemetery and a memorial service will be planned in the future. Memorial gifts may be made to Mennonite Central Committee and Bethel College (KS), in care of Kibler-Brady-Ruestman Memorial Home in Bloomington.

Evelyn was born on July 26, 1936, in Newton, KS to Walter and Agnes (Schmidt) Dyck. She grew up in South Central Kansas and in Beatrice, NE, where her father served as a pastor. Agnes died when Evelyn was 13 and Walter's marriage to Martha Suderman created a new blended family. In 1954, after graduating from Berean Academy in Elbing, KS, she enrolled at Bethel College in North Newton, KS majoring in Chemistry. In the summer of 1955 she volunteered as a healthy test subject at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD. Evelyn graduated on the morning of May 26, 1958, and was married that evening, in a wedding dress she had made, to her classmate, John Bertsche.

The couple moved to Chicago, where John began medical school. Evelyn supported the family working in sales until the birth of Cynthia in 1959 and Daniel in 1961. On completion of John's medical training the family served from 1964-1966 with Mennonite Central Committee in Grande Rivière du Nord, Haiti. There, Evelyn homeschooled the children and worked with local artisans to produce crafts for sale in MCC Self Help stores.

Following three years in Evanston, IL, where John completed his medical residency, the family moved to Normal, IL. During this time Evelyn was a homemaker and volunteered with church and community organizations. Evelyn and John were active longtime members of the Mennonite Church of Normal.

In the 1980s Evelyn pursued her interest in pastoral ministry and spiritual direction by furthering her education at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN, and the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Washington, DC. She served as associate pastor at the Mennonite Church of Normal for 14 years. She also served on the board of directors of Bethel College and was active in church conference leadership. In 1996, she retired and helped care for her aging parents.

Evelyn enjoyed gardening and cooking, was an avid reader, and participated in weekly book study groups. She and John served as host family for nearly 40 international students, mostly from ISU.

She is survived by children, Cynthia (Chuck) Regier, and Dan (Lynette) Bertsche, grandchildren, Abe (Christiana Harms) Regier, Paul (Amanda) Regier, Emma (John) Reesor,

Lisle (Elias) Kehr, and Adrienne (Layton) Graves; and great-grandchildren Iva and Samuel Regier, and Julian Reesor. She is also survived by a sister, Delores (Marvin) Bartel; sisters-in-law, June Bertsche, Elvera Suderman, Judy Beechy and Helga Edvardson Dyck; and a brother-in-law, LaMar Reichert.

She was preceded in death by husband, John; brothers, Gordon Dyck, Gerald Dyck, Charles Suderman; brother-in-law, Paul Bertsche; and sister-in-law, Adele Reichert.

# Comments

---



“ When I think of Evelyn I think of how kind she was. We first met John and Evelyn when we began attending the Mennonite Church of Normal. We had only been attending for a short time when they invited us into their home for the evening and wanted to get to know us better. Through the years we came to greatly admire both of them. John had been our family physician for years and I had always trusted and respected him but in the church, I loved how he always made sure he met everyone with a greeting and a strong handshake. While both my husband I worked outside the home, so when it came time for Bible School our children weren't able to attend because we lived out in the country and had no way to get to the church. That didn't stop Evelyn from offering to pick up and take our kids home after Bible School and each year she offered to do that for us. One year when I was teaching the 3rd and 4th grade Sunday School she was my assistant and throughout the year we planned things to do with our class outside of the classroom. One thing they decided to do was to go roller skating and even though Evelyn was older at that time she joined in the fun. A couple of years ago I found a picture of that time and gave John a picture of Evelyn at the end of the "train" we had formed to skate around the room. I remember a time when she was the Associate Pastor and I was called for jury duty and the case was for a man that had killed his girlfriend. As each of the potential jury members was called for review we had to say if we would be willing to decide on the death penalty. I wasn't called to be questioned on the first day and that evening I was troubled by the question. I had always been taught an eye for an eye, and that it would be an easy decision if it was up to me to decide if a person was to live or die, but when it came down to making that decision, I felt confused. I remember meeting with Evelyn the night before I had to take the stand and told her the conflict I was having and needed to know how God viewed it. She didn't tell me what to do but listened to how I was feeling and she shared God's Word with me and we talked for quite a while. I felt so relieved after talking to her and when I left I knew that I wouldn't be able to be a part of the jury as what I really believed was I couldn't be a part of judging someone else for the death sentence. That decision made me aware of what I really believed deep in my soul and I have never forgotten it. These are only a few of my thoughts when I think of Evelyn and I have many more but I will always think of her as a woman of God and the wonderful testimony she left behind.

My Thoughts and Blessings are with you through this time,

Ruth Haney

Ruth Haney - November 07, 2020 at 09:51 AM