

Alice Bouma



Alice's Life Story



Alice Bouma was a woman with the gift of bringing light and beauty to the world. Whether by working diligently in her garden, creating a beautiful and loving home for her children, or traveling the world with her husband, Alice lived her life to the fullest. A loving mother and devoted wife, Alice found joy in all that she did, and in turn brought joy to others.

Alice's story began on the dawn of WWI in the Netherlands. On January 21, 1913, proud parents Ralph and Gertrude (Zoethout) Lautenbach were blessed with the birth of their first daughter, Alice. Ralph and Gertrude's family soon grew to include Jean, Agnes, Jacob, and a baby boy. Alice enjoyed a happy childhood in the Netherlands. Throughout her life she

kept fond memories of skating on frozen canals, receiving eggs and oranges on St. Nicholas Day, and wearing wooden shoes to church on Christmas. The family was supported by her father, who worked as a sailor, while her mother, a homemaker, maintained a loving home for her family.



Alice's family, who were members of the Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands, soon found themselves facing difficult times in their country. With the combined hardships from the food shortages of WWI and the Spanish Flu, people rarely left their homes during this time. It was no different for Alice's family. When her younger brothers died at home the family dared not bury them because of the risk this would cause to the remainder of the family. Alice viewed much pain during this time of her life, as many of the family's friends and neighbors died.

In 1928, Alice's father left for America by ship eight months later, she, her mother, and two sisters boarded the "Volendam" and ventured to America to join him in starting their new life. In October of 1928 the ship arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey. After that, a short 3 day train ride reunited the family in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where her father worked at American Boxboard Company.

Alice and her family lived in the parsonage of Grandville Avenue Christian Reformed Church where they were faithful members. After arriving in America, Alice family was blessed with the birth of one last child,

Cora. After arriving in America, she was faced with the challenge of learning English. She rose to the occasion and attended South Grandville Avenue Christian School where a special teacher taught her English.

She attended school until she was 16, and then became employed as a live-in maid and acquired many domestic skills. During this

time she enjoyed touring the state with her boyfriend in his Model T convertible.

A few years later while working in East Grand Rapids, Alice became infatuated with a man named



Titus Bouma who was a gardener at the house next door. After a brief courtship, Alice and Titus were married on August 24, 1933 by the Justice of the Peace in Goshen, IN.

The newlyweds lived in several apartments until they saved money to buy a home. Finally they were able to purchase their first home on Galewood Street for five thousand dollars. A few years later, they sold it for a better price and purchased a much bigger house located on Gratiot Street where they made their permanent home. They were blessed with five children, Ann, Ralph, Joan, Jean, and Kathy. The children were well provided for and especially enjoyed summers at their cottage on Wolf Lake. The family were members of Richmond Reformed Church for many years.

Alice worked hard to raise her children and maintained a fine home. She instilled in her children a strong work ethic. Alice was a meticulous housekeeper, for instance every Spring and Fall the home was cleaned from top to bottom.

Alice also had an appreciation for beauty, whether by working in her garden growing iris and tulips, painting nature scenes, or redecorating her home. She had a special passion for her rose garden in which she prided herself in being familiar with varied species of roses.

Alice was a most gifted seamstress, and had the ability to skilfully knit, crochet, cross-stitch, and do needlepoint. Her children and grandchildren loved her delicious soups, breads, and casseroles. Alice was a very classy lady and it was reflected in her grooming and dress.

After her children were grown, Alice took advantage of her free time by learning to drive, traveling Michigan with friends, and getting a job as a nurse's aide at Christian Rest Home, where she worked for 20 years. In the mid 80's when Titus retired, the two enjoyed traveling together. They took trips to the Netherlands, Austria and Germany to visit relatives, and also traveled to different places throughout America. She went to California and Washington twice by train, also took a cruise to Alaska. When winters came, she and Titus enjoyed spending extended periods of time in her favorite place, Gulf Shores, AL.



In her retirement, Alice also fulfilled a lifelong dream by volunteering for World Vision in Haiti. The trip had a great impact on her as she witnessed the severe poverty and helplessness of the people there, and was greatly moved with compassion.

Alice was a very intelligent woman. She took great joy in life, had a great work ethic, and was very intuitive about those she loved. She was a wonderful Christian

mother who showed great love and devotion to her family. With a great sense of humor, a strong will, and a zest for the world around her, Alice lived her life with great joy and made every day count. Alice was truly a blessing to those she knew, and will be greatly missed.

Alice Bouma (Nee Lautenbach), aged 95, went to be with her Lord on August 11, 2008. She was preceded in death by her husband, Titus; daughter, Jean Larsen; grandson, Kendall Larsen, and brother-in-law, Bert Bouma. Alice was born January 21, 1913 in the Providence of Friesland, Netherlands. She is survived by her children, Ann & Ted DeLeeuw, Ralph & Fran Bouma, Joan & Terry Hurt, and Kathleen Bouma; son-in-law, Kendall Larsen; 17 grandchildren; 44 great-grandchildren and one more great-grandchild expected; 6 great-great grandchildren and one more great-great-grandchild expected; her sister, Cora & Roger Ondersma; and sister-in-law, Stella Bouma. The family wishes to thank the staff of Oakcrest Manor, Hospice of Holland Home and Visiting Angels for their undivided and personal attention and wonderful care given to Alice. The funeral service will be held at 11 AM on Thursday at First Evangelical Covenant Church, 1933 Tremont NW. Friends may visit with the family from 6-8 PM on Wednesday at Heritage Life Story Funeral Homes, 2120 Lake Michigan Dr. NW and for one hour prior to the funeral at church. Memorial contributions may be made to Mel Trotter Ministries or International Aid. Please visit www.lifestorynet.com to archive a memory, photo, or sign the guestbook if you are unable to attend.



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