

Olga R. Claassen

(June 8, 1918 - July 5, 2010)

Olga Rose (Schultz) Claassen was born on June 8, 1918 to Henry H. and Mary (Fast) Schultz in Mt. Lake, Minnesota. She entered the heavenly presence of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ at the age of 92.



Olga spent the first 8 years of life in Minnesota, moving then to Lustre, Montana. Family church attendance and involvement were very important to her. At the age of 9 her mother, Mary died of liver cancer. As she was dying, her mother said she hoped all her children would be in heaven with her. This left a deep impression on Olga. She accepted Christ as Savior at the age of 12 and was baptized by Rev. A. C. Wall the same year. At the age of 18, Olga, her parents and a brother moved to Dallas, Oregon.

After High School and working 2 years, Olga began studies at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (now Biola University) in 1940, graduating in 1943 with a degree in Christian Education. From childhood, God had placed in her heart a desire to serve Him, she thought in Africa. (Later, it was two of her sons who served there.)

At Biola she was impressed by a handsome young man who worked with her in the dining room. It was Curt Claassen, who she married on June 1, 1944 in Dallas, Oregon.

Curt too had felt a call to missions, and to India in particular. They boarded a ship for India in November, 1945, under the General Conference Mennonite Mission Board. There they served in the fields of evangelism, teaching in the Janjgir Bible School, church planting, encouraging isolated Christians in villages and mentoring Indian evangelists. Olga, having a love and concern for the salvation of children, held Bible classes for them. On their extended first furlough to the USA, it was a privilege to serve the Beatrice, Nebraska Mennonite Church.

Their 4 sons, Lloyd, Gordon, Eldon and Loren all grew up in India, graduating from Woodstock Boarding School. As a wife, mother and missionary, Olga had many roles. Her example in all of them clearly modeled and taught her family the ways of the Lord and the importance of following Him.

Curt and Olga served the Lord in India from 1945 to 1973. In 1975 Curt and Olga moved to Berne, Indiana to serve in the First Mennonite Church, where for 20 years Curt was an Assistant and Visitation Pastor. Olga often accompanied him in hospital and home visitation. She was given to hospitality, and was known to invite total strangers who were visiting First Mennonite home for Sunday dinner. She was a member of First

Mennonite Church, taught Sunday School, participated in Women in Mission, wrote for the "Update" and involved herself in many other ways in church life. She and Curt have been greatly blessed by many expressions of love and support from the people of the church and the Berne community.

Olga was preceded in death by her parents, step-mother Anna Wiebe Schultz, 5 brothers and 4 sisters. She is survived by her loving husband, Curt, their four sons and wives: Lloyd & Gail, Gordon & Jarna, Eldon & Jan, Loren & Patricia, and her grandchildren Joshua and wife Ashley, Caleb and wife Beth, Anna, Sarah, Kenneth and Kyle Claassen, and many nephews and nieces.

Olga's heart was committed to her Savior, Jesus Christ, her husband Curt, her family and the various ministries in which she served her Lord and people around her. We, her family are immensely thankful for her life well-lived and her love for Christ. We celebrate who she was and her influence in our lives.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, July 10, 2010 at the First Mennonite Church in Berne with the Pastors Jeff Linthicum and Jerry Flueckiger officiating. Interment will be in the M.R.E. Cemetery of rural Berne.

Family and friends will be received from 3:00 – 8:00 p.m. Friday July 9, 2010 at the Swiss Village Chapel and one hour prior to the funeral service on Saturday at the First Mennonite Church.

Preferred memorials are to the First Mennonite Church Missions.

Yager-Kirchhofer Funeral Home online obit (accessed 5/10/2013)