



## Donald Abernethy

May 6, 1933 - July 20, 2012

Bismarck, North Dakota: Donald Abernethy, age 79, of Sentinel Butte, North Dakota passed away on Friday, July 13, 2012 at St. Alexis Medical Center in Bismarck. Visitation will be from 9:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. on Thursday, July 19, 2012 at the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Beach and 1:00 P.M. until 2:00 P.M. on Friday, July 20, 2012 at the Golden Valley County Fairgrounds in Beach. Funeral Services will be held at 2:00 P.M. on Friday, July 20, 2012 at the Golden Valley County Fairgrounds with Reverend Warren Maxted officiating. Interment will be in the Sentinel Butte Cemetery in Sentinel Butte, North Dakota. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Beach has been entrusted with the arrangements. Don was born on May 6, 1933 to Burns and Peg (Johnston) Abernethy in Beach. He attended Lincoln Elementary School in Beach, Plain View School north of Sentinel Butte and high school in both Beach and Sentinel Butte. Don, his brother, Bob, and their friends spent winters after high school in Arizona and Florida. They worked during the week and competed in rodeos on weekends. On September 7, 1955, Donald and Rella (Cook) were married at the Congregational Church in Sentinel Butte. They lived in Glendive, Montana, where Don was employed by Wagner Plumbing & Heating. They soon started their family with two daughters, LaDonna and Bobbi Jo. When the girls were young, Don and Rella enrolled in Dickinson Teachers College in Dickinson, North Dakota where they both received their two-year teaching certificates in the spring of 1962. Summers after college were filled with travel while the Abernethys completed

their Bachelor's Degrees. Don loved meeting new people and learning all his life. His education continued during summers at University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas and Chadron State in Chadron, Nebraska. Don received his Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Dickinson State in 1971. The Abernethy's first teaching assignment was at Twin Lakes Elementary north of Williston, North Dakota from 1962 through 1970. While Rella taught grades first through fourth grade in the two-room country school, Don taught grades 5-8. The eight years they spent at Williston created lasting friendships. Hunting, trapping, fishing, and snowmobiling were Don's obsessions. From Williston, the family moved to Tolley, North Dakota where Don taught fifth and sixth grade for three years. He loved coaching Pee Wee basketball and continued to find excellent fishing spots, hunting areas for ducks and geese, and making more life-long friends, which he referred to as his 'heroes'. Ready for a new adventure, Don left teaching to manage and operate Bird's Point Resort on Round Lake in southern Saskatchewan. From 1973-1975 the family spent their summers working at the resort. Don stayed there most of the year hosting hunting and fishing enthusiasts. Many of their 'Canadian friends' included the Pearson family. Clark Pearson lived with the Abernethy's for nine years as part of the family. In 1975, Don returned to the farm north of Sentinel Butte where he and Rella have resided since. He raised cattle, wheat, hay, and a variety of other crops as well as operated Don's Rain Gutter Service. Big Top Fireworks was another adventure for Don and Rella for several years. Each year the kids, grandkids, and friends would pile in to help. Don also served as a substitute bus driver and was a county commissioner in Golden Valley County for twelve years. Don enjoyed life with his family and friends. Hunting and fishing (especially spear-fishing) continued to be his favorite pastimes, as well as a good game of pinochle. Hunting bear in Minnesota and 'guiding' elk hunters near home added to his collection of stories and videos. The discovery of ancient Clovis-era artifacts on his land was one of the most exciting events of his life. The artifacts excavated by Don and his friends were donated to the North Dakota Heritage Center. Don was

preceded in death by his parents and grandparents. Don leaves his wife of 56 years, Rella, who supported his adventurous spirit with patience and humor, his two daughters, LaDonna Fallgatter of Bismarck, North Dakota and Bobbi (Marvin) Hansen of Belgrade, Montana; who blessed him with five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. They include Donny Fallgatter, Nashville, Tennessee; Mitch (Jenn) Fallgatter, Lakeville, Minnesota and children Leo and Mila; Jeff (Erin) Fallgatter, West Fargo, North Dakota and children - Kadence, Riley, and Wyatt; Marty Hansen, Maupin, Oregon; and Jen (Russ) Smith and children - Carlie and Jacey of Belgrade, Montana. 'Grandpa Fatso' left them with countless memories. Don is also survived by his brother Bob (Sally) Abernethy of Beach and their children: Jim (Jan) Abernethy; Jeff Abernethy; and Jody (Tate) Cymbaluk and their families. Extended family members and friends will miss Don. Playing pinochle with them, sharing stories, playing jokes, fishing, and hunting were the highlights of his life. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: [www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com](http://www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com).

# Tribute Wall



“ *Donald Abernethy*

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December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM