



Ernstena Brown

January 11, 1926 - March 15, 2021

Ernstena “Tena” Maria Schepens Brown, beloved mother, grandmother, GG, aunt, nurse and friend, passed away peacefully in the early morning hours of Monday, March 15, 2021, in Miles City at the home of her daughter Carla with family by her side. She was 95 years old. Visitation will be from 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM with a vigil service beginning at 5:00 PM on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at the Silha Funeral Home in Glendive. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:00 AM on Friday, March 26, 2021 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Glendive with Father Joseph Ponessa officiating. Rite of Committal will be in the Dawson County Cemetery. Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements.

Tena was born January 11, 1926, at the Glendive Hospital to Ernstena (Frankenburg) and John Schepens, the adored youngest child of six children. She started her education at the very young age of four, as her older siblings were already in school and she tagged along with them. She attended Deer Creek Country School (the same school her nine children would later attend) until eight grade and graduated from Dawson County High School at the age of 15. After waiting for the required age of 17 to enroll, Tena furthered her education by entering the Presentation School of Nursing in Miles City in June of 1944. She graduated two years later in 1946 and then attended the Anesthesia School at St. Luke Hospital for eight months in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Jim Brown and Tena were married October 16, 1948, in Glendive. They briefly

moved to Miles City where Tena worked as a nurse anesthetist at Holy Rosary Hospital. In 1951, they returned to Glendive, and she started at Glendive's Northern Pacific Hospital, working in obstetrics and administering anesthesia for the next 11 ½ years. Her nursing career spanned 45 dedicated years (44 of those in the Glendive community) where she exhibited a Christ-like love and devotion to all her patients. Tena dedicated the majority of her life to helping others, and through her work, she was able to help countless patients from Eastern Montana and Western North Dakota. Before retiring from nursing in 1989, Tena held many different positions within the hospital, including that of surgical scrub nurse and manager of the surgery center. She was also present at the birth of numerous grandchildren and assisted in many of their surgeries.

As dedicated as Tena was to her work, she was just as loyal to her faith and family. She worked through the births and childhoods of all nine of her children, and although she may have missed a few meals and holidays through the years, she made sure to make it up to the kids when she was home. In doing so, she instilled a strong work ethic in her family, many of whom went into the medical field themselves. She also introduced a strong work/family balance and sense of faith in all her children. Tena was a member of the Sacred Heart Church in Glendive her entire life, and all of her children and many of her grandchildren were baptized there.

Tena's cinnamon rolls and pies were world famous, and if you were fortunate to be the recipient of either, it was evident the amount of time and effort she put into both. Very few holidays were ever celebrated without Tena bringing a half dozen or more pies to share. She was also an avid gardener and continued to harvest pickles, beets, and green beans well into her late 80's. The family often joked that she continued to garden as if she had nine children to feed and never could cut back; consequently, we all enjoyed the fruits of her labors for many years!

For so many of us, our fondest childhood memories include trips to Fort Peck to stay with Grandma and Grandpa Brown at Uncle Steve's cabin, where there

were never enough beds for all of us, but always plenty of sunshine, wind and of course food; we were never going to go hungry on her watch! This is a beloved tradition we have continued because of her influence, and it is now a weekend trip our children look forward to and insist on attending. She was able to make the annual journey to the lake until she was 94-years-old. Grandma, we promise to continue to meet at Fort Peck for as long as they will allow us!

Grandma Brown had an endless amount of patience and devotion for all of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren; traveling far and wide to attend choir, band, and piano recitals, basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, football, and soccer games, honor society inductions and scholarship nights, kinder, 8th grade, high school and college graduations, weddings and baptisms well into her 90's. She was the biggest cheerleader and champion of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren and was sure to keep every referee and umpire on the right side of the call!

Tena was preceded in death by her husband of 49 years James "Jim" Brown; parents John and Ernstena Schepens; her mother and father-in-law Palmer and Betty Brown; sister Gertrude Udem; four brothers Henry, Charles, Leo, and Fred Schepens, and one grandson, Jess Stout.

Tena is survived by her children: Cathie (Robert) Dolatta and children Cami (John) Graham and Tisha (Tyler) Larsen; Robert (Bob) and children Amy (Greg) Gingell, Stacie (James) Carter and Sara (Keith) Evans; Carol (Marvin) Varner and children Jacie (Brett) Schoenen, Tonya (Jeff) Appelt, and Laini (Brian) McNaney; Colleen (Jack) Hoffman and children Loni Handran and Ashlie (Ryan) Staiger; Chris (Jim) Stout and children Chad (Stephanie) Stout and Lacie Stout; Carla (Jim) Boucher and children Shawn (Michaela) Hystad, Cameron (Kim) Hystad and Clint (Sarah) Boucher; Steve (Sandra) Brown and son Sven (Joy) Udem; Craig (Alicia) Brown and children Bailey, Kayla and Kaitlin; Cheri (Dave) Strouf and children Brock (Leah) Strouf and Amber Strouf. Tena and also survived by 34 great-grandchildren, very special nieces

Connie Udem, Sue (Bruce) Peterson and Jeanne Udem, and sister-in-law Betty Lou (Daryl) De Kaye.

We would like to express our most sincere appreciation to the staff at Holy Rosary Residential Living for the outstanding care our mother received in your care for the last twenty-two months of her life.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in Tena's name are suggest to the Glendive Medical Center Foundation at 202 Prospect Drive, Glendive, MT 59330.

Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silhafuneralhomes.com.

Cemetery Details

Dawson County Cemetery

Corner of North Sargent Ave. and East Allard
Street
Glendive, MT 59330

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 25. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (MT)

Silha Funeral Homes - Glendive, Montana
221 N. Meade Avenue
P.O. Box 848
Glendive, MT 59330
(406) 377-2622
silha@midrivers.com
<https://www.silhafuneralhomes.com>

Vigil Service

MAR 25. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (MT)

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221 N. Meade Avenue
P.O. Box 848
Glendive, MT 59330
(406) 377-2622
silha@midrivers.com
<https://www.silhafuneralhomes.com>

Mass of Christian Burial

MAR **26**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (MT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
316 West Benham Street
Glendive, MT 59330

Tribute Wall



“ *Ernstena Brown*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM



“ *Your friends at BillingsClinic- Miles City purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Ernstena Brown.*



Your friends at BillingsClinic- Miles City - March 25, 2021 at 12:33 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ernstena Brown.*



March 24, 2021 at 04:27 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Ernstena Brown.*



March 24, 2021 at 08:44 AM

KG

“ Many years ago when my sister passed away, out of all the messages of condolence I received, a card in the mail from Tena Brown with a lengthy note still stands out. She knew me as a kid from Deer Creek, and I hadn't seen her in quite a few years after visiting with her once up at the hospital when she was working. She always had that smile, just like in the picture.

She, too, had lost a sister. The words she wrote to me were genuine; they came from her personal self, and they conveyed to me an understanding. I remember reading her card over and over, and feeling a sense of comfort, a connection, knowing someone else knew exactly what I was feeling. Her heartfelt thoughts and caring will to share them touched me, and helped me. I will never forget it.

My sincere condolences now, to all of her family, in the passing of Tena.

Kim (Bender) George

Kim George - March 22, 2021 at 07:48 PM

GE

“ Grace Koffler Evinrude lit a candle in memory of Ernstena Brown



Grace Koffler Evinrude - March 20, 2021 at 10:35 AM

BA

“ Great picture! Yes! That was the Tena Brown I fondly remember. She was always so kind to me whenever we visited your home. Our wonderful Deer Creek School community has been shortchanged by one lovely soul. How I enjoyed Tena's cinnamon rolls! Bless you all. I share your sadness. Bobi

Bobi (Jonutis) Allard - March 19, 2021 at 02:47 PM

LF

“ Linda Frank lit a candle in memory of Ernstena Brown



Linda Frank - March 18, 2021 at 12:50 AM

DJ

“ Dixie Justice sent a virtual gift in memory of Ernstena Brown



Dixie Justice - March 17, 2021 at 07:03 PM



“ Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Ernstena Brown.



March 17, 2021 at 03:00 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Ernstena Brown.*



March 17, 2021 at 01:21 PM



“ *Tena and my mom, Beth Adele (Betty Prestbye) Beller (Kalispell) met at Farmer's Union Camp when they were in their teens. Mom continued to exchange Christmas cards with Tena until Mom passed away 10 years ago. As a child, I remember taking a trip across Montana and stopping to visit Tena! In 2012 my sister and I babysat for Morgan Appelt, and discovered that Tena was her great grandmother. What a small world! Sincere sympathy to her family as you mourn her death. I love the thought that Mom and Tena are getting reacquainted!*

Kathy Buszmann - March 17, 2021 at 08:41 AM



“ *Cathy, Bob, Carol, Colleen, Chris, Carla, Steve, Craig, and Cheri: I really hope I got you all! Hearing of your mom's passing brought back lots of memories of Deer Creek and all the great times we shared growing up! Of course, school! So many many memories! We were outside on noon recess; Carla, JoJo, and I were in the first grade; your mom stopped and told us President Kennedy had been assassinated. Softball games. Field days. 4-H. Dawson County Fair. Your mom made such amazing cinnamon rolls! I remember trading my mom's famous chocolate chip cookies for your mom's famous rolls!! And sleepovers at your house were so very fun! We had a pretty great childhood, didn't we? My condolences to you all!*

Margie Rahr - March 16, 2021 at 11:14 PM

BT

“ *Becky Tipton sent a virtual gift in memory of Ernstena Brown*



Becky Tipton - March 16, 2021 at 09:09 PM

BT

“ *Tena's Family!
I'm so sorry for your loss! She was an Amazing Lady!
Cherish Your Memories!
RIP Tena!*

Becky Tipton - March 16, 2021 at 09:08 PM

CA

“ *Sorry for the loss of such a special lady. Take comfort in your memories. Hugs for all of her family.*

Candy & Darry Austby - March 16, 2021 at 08:59 PM

JD

“ *John And. Terra Doll sent a virtual gift in memory of Ernstena Brown*



John and. Terra Doll - March 16, 2021 at 08:58 PM

DS

“ *Denise Stoddart lit a candle in memory of Ernstena Brown*



Denise Stoddart - March 16, 2021 at 08:02 PM

RB

“ *To all the Brown family, sad to hear the passing of a special lady, Tena always stopped and talked when I would see her. Sympathy to all the families. RIP TENA Renee and Gary Bennett*

Renee Bennett - March 16, 2021 at 07:09 PM

WF

“ *With Peace & Love, Carin & Jim Larsen & families purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Ernstena Brown.*



With Peace & Love, Carin & Jim Larsen & families - March 16, 2021 at 06:55 PM

BC

“ *I had the privilege of working with Tina at the hospital for several years! She was a gem!! She will be missed!!*

Becky Caudill - March 16, 2021 at 06:41 PM



“ So sorry to hear of Tena’s passing. She lived a full life to get to 95. Cherish the memories. Hugs to all the family!
Sherry and Arvid Corneliusen

Sherry Corneliusen - March 16, 2021 at 09:13 AM

KM

Great great lady, great family!

kevin mcgovern - March 16, 2021 at 08:03 PM

LE

“ Steve&Sandy the brown family so sorry about Tina she had a wonderful life.Now she can rest in peace. Mike and Linda Endres



Linda Endres - March 15, 2021 at 10:01 PM

SM

Tina was a wonderful person, mother, nurse and friend. I so enjoyed working with her. She had faith and I know she is with Christ our Lord God bless you all. Sandi & Kevin McGovern

Sandra McGovern - March 16, 2021 at 11:36 AM

JH

To Carla and all the rest of you Brown kids...you and your family, your Mom and Dad, you were such a big part of my childhood years at Deer Creek School, an important family in our community. It saddens me that you have lost your Mama, Tena. I remember we were all so impressed that she was a nurse, and yet had such a large brood to care for at home. I wish for you good times together as you rehash memories and say your goodbyes to her. You have my deepest sympathy. JoJo

Jo Anne Jonutis Herem - March 16, 2021 at 03:36 PM