



## Leona Jendro

January 5, 1925 - March 1, 2014

Leona Jendro, age 89, of Bismarck, North Dakota, formerly of Beach, North Dakota, passed away in Bismarck on Saturday, March 1, 2014. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 10:00 A.M. on Friday, May 30, 2014 at Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Beach with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Beach has been entrusted with the arrangements. Leona was born on January 5, 1925, a daughter of Joseph and Celia (Ethan) Stewart. Leona was raised on the family farm in northern Wibaux County, Montana with four brothers and three sisters. She was educated in the Wibaux schools, graduating from Wibaux High School. Leona continued her education by attending Miles Community College in Miles City, Montana and college in Spokane, Washington becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Leona met and later married Hugo Petermann on October 9, 1942 in Baker, Montana. Together they raised five children on a farm south of Wibaux. Leona worked as an LPN at the Beach Hospital in Beach for several years. She enjoyed meeting people and could strike up a conversation virtually anywhere with anyone. After the passing of Hugo, Leona married Clifford Jendro on June 9, 1972 in Baker. Clifford and Leona farmed on his family's homestead until their retirement when they moved into Beach. Leona continued to live in Beach until the passing of Clifford when she moved and made her final residence in Bismarck.

Leona was a very giving person to anyone she knew. She insisted living a very simple life for herself. She would say, though farm life was often a hard-

scrabble existence, they were her most fond memories. She loved traveling, outdoor life, camping and could not be any happier then pulling another perch out of the pond. Leona was never afraid to get her hands dirty, and was often more of a “handy man” than most handy men.

Leona was preceded in death by her parents; four brothers; three sisters; two husbands; one son, Joseph Petermann; one daughter-in-law, Rayell Petermann and one granddaughter, Barbara Johnson.

Leona is survived by three sons, James (Bruce) Petermann, George (Sandra) Petermann, Gary (Debbie) Petermann; one daughter, Judith (David) Anderson; three grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: [www.silve-rnale-silhafuneralhome.com](http://www.silve-rnale-silhafuneralhome.com).

“A mother holds her children’s hands for a while... Their hearts forever.”

As we honor Leona Petermann Jendro and remember and celebrate her life, most of what you will hear today are the memories and perceptions of her as a mother and grandmother. Having outlived her two husbands, Hugo Petermann and Cliff Jendro, and all of her siblings, Leona’s legacy, her story, lives on in the hearts and memories of her children and grandchildren.

Leona’s story begins and ends where her roots ran deep, in the rural communities of Wibaux, Montana and Beach, North Dakota.

Born in the mid 1920’s, Leona was the youngest of eight children, four boys and four girls. Leona would jokingly say that when she came along her parents had run out of names, and that is why her birth certificate reads “baby Stewart.” Leona’s father always referred to her as “baby.”

Leona was especially close with her brother Ray. They referred to each other as “sunshine and moonbeam” but we aren’t sure who was who. Leona was also close to her sister Eleonor, and when Eleonor lived in Louisiana, she and Leona talked every Saturday.

Leona received her education in the Wibaux schools. She played basketball and she also played the tuba in the band. Leona grew to be barely five feet two but, as son James says, she was as tough as a railroad spike.

Leona was raised on the family farm in northern Wibaux county, and son Gary says his mother spoke fondly of growing up on the ranch. She loved the horseback riding and she learned to gather various berries and wild fruits available in the creek bottoms and from these fruits of the land, Leona enjoyed making jams and jellies and the occasional crock of wine.

Ranch life bred a love of the outdoors, a strong work ethic, an appreciation for the simple life. Leona would say that though farm life was often a “hard scrabble”, these times were her fondest memories. There was a closeness with family and the land that endured throughout Leona’s life.

At age 17, Leona married Hugo Petermann, and at age 18 she gave birth to the first of her five children, son, James. James remembers his mother as a young woman, strong, full of life and a woman who could get things done.

James says his mother enjoyed music from the big bands and the swing era. She loved to dance, and competed and won prizes in dance competitions.

“Leona loved a good joke, and if it was slightly blue, all the better.”

James recalls that his mother never raised her voice. If she wanted you to

really listen to her, she would speak softer so you had to lean in to listen.

Leona and Hugo lived, worked, and raised their five children, James, Judith, Joseph, George, and Gary, on a farm south of Wibaux. Inside the home or outside doing chores, Leona did it all. Come branding time Leona was as good in the jeep as any man on a horse, especially when it came to bringing out calves that were stuck in dry gullies.

One particular memory James has of his mother and ranch work showcases her competitive nature. Leona had had enough of hearing Hugo and James' Uncle Elmer brag about their perfectly constructed hay bale stacks. Leona drafted James as her helper and they built a stack of bales 10 layers high, alongside the same built by Hugo and Elmer. According to James, three years later, when he returned to Wibaux on leave from the Navy, his mother couldn't wait to show him the two stacks – theirs still solidly in place, and his dad and Elmer's stack sliding downhill. James characterized his mother by saying that it just didn't pay to challenge Leona to anything!

Son George relates that as small children, the arrival of spring was marked by their dad hooking up the disc plow. The first thing he would do was to plow up Leona's garden area and get it ready for planting. Later, in the fall, when it was time for the harvest, George was always surprised that his mother never said anything about the suspicious amount of small, fresh dug potatoes and peas that never made it into her basket.

And the Petermann kids knew that if you worked hard at churning, you might get to be the first to make a sandwich with the new butter.

Farming and ranching being what it is and not always a profitable annual enterprise, Leona really shined during the lean times. She pitched in, cooking at the truck stop and at the Shamrock, she butchered at the locker plant, and later at age 40, she continued her education and received her college nursing degree, working at the hospital in Beach for several years.

In the early days, Leona and Hugo and their family's social life revolved around the weekly pinochle game that traveled from neighbor to neighbor.

Son George remembers the fun his mother had with them and how innovative she could be. The children enjoyed sliding down the hill in back of their farmhouse. George says, "Mom showed us kids (mostly me) that we could still have fun sledding even without a sled. She actually got one of dad's grain scoop shovels and showed us kids how to sled with a shovel. She almost made it all the way to the front door before she stopped. Then she gave each of us some cardboard boxes, flattened them, and we had even more fun." Typically, sledding and other activities were accompanied by Leona's famous hot chocolate that she served to all the neighborhood kids that showed up on the hill.

In the mid-50's, James tells that his mother and some of her friends decided that the town needed a skating rink. How to get one? Well, among the ideas they came up with for raising money was to put on a play! The Peptomist Club was formed and they produced the play they called "The Diet Starts Tomorrow," which they performed in the high school gymnasium. With the play, some bake sales, and some bending of husbands' arms, Leona and the other Peptomists raised enough money to give the town its first skating rink.

James says of his mother ...“when Leona wanted to get or do something, there was simply no point in getting in her way. She would wear you down.”

When Leona was in, what was to be, the middle of her life, Hugo died. Of their marriage, James observed that Leona was the love of Hugo’s life.

Leona’s second husband was Cliff Jendro, a man who ranched north of Wibaux on his family’s homestead. At the time, Cliff lived with his mother and he wanted Leona to move from town and live with he and his mother on the ranch. Leona did not view that arrangement favorably. Eventually Leona and her mother-in-law switched houses and Leona moved to the ranch bringing her youngest son, Gary. Cliff and Leona lived on and worked the ranch together until they retired in 1992, at which time they moved to Beach.

Leona was passionate about the outdoor life, especially camping and fishing. She always kept her camping gear in the car next to her fishing pole, just in case. A tent was a luxury for Leona.

Leona was good with her hands. She kept them busy and wasn’t afraid to get them dirty. More times than not, she was the family handyman.

She loved to travel and one of her proudest possessions was her passport, something she was overjoyed to get because in 1991, Leona visited Spain and Portugal, a truly exciting time in her life.

Son Gary characterizes his mother as someone who loved to meet people,

and could strike up a conversation with anyone, anywhere, anytime. She enjoyed writing letters, even if it was just a short note.

Leona was never late, but never seemed to be in a hurry to get anywhere. She thought the scenic route was always the best one to take.

She was strong-willed and always knew what she wanted; a shrewd negotiator who enjoyed a “good” argument.

Extremely frugal when it came to her personal needs and wants, Leona was a very generous person to others, always ready to lend a hand. Son George remembers one of Leona’s neighbors in Beach telling how during winters when the highway was closed due to snow, truckers would be parked along the street in front of her house. Leona would make a large pot of coffee and a plate of cookies, and give them to the truckers sitting in their trucks. Leona always said she was a sucker for any trucker wearing a moustache and/or a beard.

Leona lived a simple life and she could never seem to fathom the enormous selections at Walmart. When Gary would take her to shop for groceries, they would make a day of it as Leona would walk the aisles like a kid in a candy store.

For Gary, his mother was his rock. He calls her his connection to his roots and upbringing. Gary says, “No matter where I went, I always knew she would be there. She was “home” to me.

More than anything, Leona loved to hear from her grandkids. They were a source of great pride for her. The following are thoughts of his grandmother written by Leona’s grandson, Joe Petermann.

“Grandma Lee was always an exceptional person to be around. There was never a quiet moment when one spent time with her. She had many various life experiences and was always eager to share those experiences with anyone she met. Not only did she have a story to tell all the time, she would help anyone she could with anything they might need. She was always a friendly, kind hearted person.

My parents and I used to travel to Beach frequently to see her and her late husband Cliff. As a child, I always was eager for these trips just because I would get to spend time with her. Grandma Lee and Grandpa Cliff always played rummy, and they had a monetary reward program set up for the winner, all involving pocket change. If Grandma Lee won, she would put change in a jar for me. Every time we would visit, I would always count the change in the jar, which was set aside as a college/CD fund for myself. I always wanted to help her any way I could. As a kid, if she was cooking or cleaning, I would always say, 'Don't worry Grandma Lee, I can do that.' She would always smile about it.

As I got older and started maturing, I joined the North Dakota National Guard. From there on out, every time I would see her, she would always remind me of the various branches of the military she has had in her family. "Well, I had the Coast Guard and the Navy, now I've got the Army." She would finish that sentence with a wide smile and a light chuckle.

Grandma Lee was an exceptional person, and will be forever missed, but always in our hearts.” Joe Petermann

Yes, the colorful, vibrant, and unique person that was Leona Petermann Jendro will remain in the hearts of those who knew and loved her. She will be cherished as a mother, a grandmother, a friend.

“Those who live on in the hearts of others, never die.”

# Tribute Wall



“ *Leona Jendro*

---

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM



“ *JUST A NOTE TO SAY WHAT A NEAT LADY LEONA WAS. WE SPENT MANY HOURS LAUGHING WITH HER AS SHE TOLD HER STORIES. MAY SHE REST IN PEACE.*

---

**RON AND CATHY ZOOK** - June 12, 2014 at 05:47 PM