

## Obituary

### Alvina Elsbernd Taney, 100

One of the last, true "School Ma'ams" of our area has died. Alvina Elsbernd Taney, 100, of Blackfoot, Idaho, passed away April 2, 2010, Good Friday, surrounded by the love of God and family.

Wife, mother, sister, daughter, aunt, grandmother, great grandmother, farm wife, homemaker, selfless school teacher and mentor, Alvina was a lifelong bestower of kindness, love and knowledge to all she met along life's way. Her tolerant and sympathetic understanding was generously extended to all who crossed her path and now echoes among the generations who knew her.

Alvina was born November 19, 1909 in Beaulieu, Minnesota. Alvina was the first child of Joseph and Clara Wieber Elsbernd. Before long, the Elsbernd's moved to Crosby, North Dakota. Those first years found Alvina living in a community composed largely of German-speaking farm families. Speaking scarcely anything but German, she was sent to elementary school and suddenly was immersed - "Sink-or-Swim" in English. She quickly mastered English, to the great gratitude of those of us privileged to read her letters and poems over the decades.

Bedeveled by the droughts, violent storms and brutal winters of the plains, the family pulled up stakes in 1920 and moved to Blackfoot, Idaho, where they acquired a farm in the Riverton Area. She attended the just-completed Saint Margaret School, graduated from Blackfoot High School, and then earned her teaching certificate from the University of Idaho Southern Branch.

Her first year of teaching was in a one-room school on a ranch near the remote Hamlet of Chilly near Mackay. She was the entire faculty. Her students were of all elementary grades and she instructed all subjects. Her students frequently arrived on horseback, and in the winter months, their teacher found herself traveling afoot through two miles of snow to and from her living quarters on the ranch. After that stint, Alvina, along with her sister, Ida, taught at Lavaside School near Blackfoot, until her marriage.

She married John Taney on May 20, 1935, and for the next several years, she and John farmed in the Pocatello Creek Area of Pocatello, Idaho, and started their family. In 1944, they moved to Blackfoot, where John operated a plumbing business for a few years, then purchased a farm in the Riverton area-oddly enough within a comfortable walking distance from the girlhood home where Alvina was reared. When the youngest of her five children reached the sixth grade, Alvina returned to Idaho State University, completed her teaching degree, and returned to the life of an educator. Initially she taught at Irving School and then spent 14 years at Stalker Elementary, usually teaching second graders.

After her retirement, she and John enjoyed life on the farm, the sunrises and sunsets, walks along the river, visits to and from friends and family, raising some cattle and welcoming the deer that wintered in the orchard, only a stone's throw from the farmhouse. John and Alvina shared their contented home with several who needed a helping hand throughout the years. John passed away in 1982. Alvina remained on the farm for several years, then moved to an apartment in Blackfoot, where she enjoyed crafts, had an enduring love of reading, playing bridge, traveling and sharing her time with those she loved. With the loving support of her children, she was able to live independently throughout those years.

She was an active and devoted member of St. Bernard's Catholic Parish for all her years in Blackfoot. Through the years she participated in activities of Delta Kappa Gamma, the League of Women Voters, Current Events Club and Grandmother's club. She served as a volunteer and secretary to the Senior Citizens' Board and in Ladies' Organizations of her church. She served on St. Bernard's Parish Council, and as a Lector, Choir Member, Eucharistic Minister to the sick and home-bound, and as a long-time correspondent of her Parish News.

Alvina is survived by daughters, Eileen (Ron) Schuttler of Spearfish, South Dakota, Mary (Tom) Robinson of Bozeman, Montana and Jean Taney of Chubbuck, Idaho; her sons, Patrick of Blackfoot, Idaho and Jim of Boise, Idaho. She has three grandsons, John (Mary), Bill (Dina) and David Schuttler; great grandson, Aidan Schuttler and twin great granddaughters, sharing Alvina's November 19 birthday, Cara and Tanian Schuttler.

Other survivors include, her sisters, Hilda Lawyer and Mary Ann Lieske both of Salem, Oregon, Marcella Rupp of Chubbuck, Idaho and sister-in-law Rosemary Elsbernd of Vacaville, California; and a myriad of nephews, nieces and cousins, and the dear, compassionate ladies of her Bible Study Group.

Besides her husband, John and her parents, Alvina was preceded in death by brothers, Raymond and Leonard Elsbernd and three sisters, Olivia Elsbernd, Mildred Elsbernd Jackson and Ida Elsbernd Fleming. Alvina and John also suffered the loss of their first child, Kathleen, who was still-born.

Rosary and visitation will be held at Hawker Funeral Home, 132 South Shilling Avenue in Blackfoot on Wednesday, April 7, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. and visitation will continue until 9 p.m. Funeral Mass will be Thursday, April 8, 2010 at St. Bernard's Church, 584 West Sexton in Blackfoot at 10 a.m. Interment will be at Grove City Cemetery. Memorial donations can be made to a favorite charity or St. Bernard's Church. Condolences may be sent to the family at [condolences@hawkerfuneralhome.com](mailto:condolences@hawkerfuneralhome.com).

