

January 16, 1924
Jasper MN
April 23, 2013
Sioux Falls

Viborg
Enterprise
May 2, 2013

ESTHER A. BOWDEN

Esther A. Bowden, age 89, passed away suddenly of natural causes on Tuesday, April 23, 2013. Funeral services were held Monday, April 29, 2013 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, with a private family committal at Woodlawn Cemetery. Memorials may be directed to the Bowden Youth Center.

Esther Alma Anderson was born on January 16, 1924. She was born in the fine little town of Jasper, Minnesota. She grew up on a farm where their family members were share croppers, and her parents both died when she was younger than 5 years old. She and her siblings were eventually asked to leave the farm, which she did with her sister Gladys in their teens, so they were true survivors. They moved into town, where she worked at a restaurant and poured beer, until Lillian Ronning pulled her out of the beer hall to come live with her and her husband Conrad, who eventually became her surrogate parents. She, by the way, was the first homecoming Queen of Jasper High.

After Jasper it was on to Sioux Falls, working at the Air Force Base, and dancing every chance she and Gladys had at the Arkota Ballroom. Their dance cards were always full, and fun was always in the wings.

Eventually, Chicago was



calling, so Esther and Gladys took a train to the City with Big Shoulders and on the way there, Esther talked with the gentlemen sitting behind her, who turned out to be Herb Bowden. They hit the dance floor at the Aragon Ballroom, fell for each other, Herb proposed to Esther in the coal mine at the Museum of Science and Industry, and they had a royal Chicago wedding at the Justice of the Peace with two people in attendance.

Next stop was starting a world class business named Sencore in downtown Chicago, where Herb ran the business and Esther ran the operations side of things, as well as the daunting task of raising four sons. In 1970 they made the decision to move their family and the entire business operation to Sioux Falls, a coming home for them both.

Herb and Esther were the

classic one two punch in business, community causes, reaching out to everyone they could touch, and everything that made Sioux Falls the great city it is today, and in the future.

Community? What can be said. Herb and Esther as a team created community wealth through leadership giving...a term which they basically coined for Sioux Falls. Not just time, not just treasures, but leading by example through hard work and giving. The Bowden Youth Center for the kids, Bowden Baseball stadium at Augustana, Volunteers of America Reboot, Center for Western Studies, Glory House, Viborg Industrial Incubator, and local and statewide capitol campaigns that went on and on. And no hired outside fund-raising "professionals"... just elbow grease and hard work.

And the ultimate was them starting the Heart Club for United Way, which is by far the largest, and finest, legacy to Herb and Esther's lives.

And of course Esther's relationship with Our Savior's Lutheran Church through the Stephen's Ministry and her visits to hundreds of people in hospitals and nursing homes throughout Sioux Falls.

She is survived by a whole bunch of people that love her very much, too many to mention, but including her four sons and wives: Bob, Ron, Al and Terri, and Doug and Mary, and all of their children: Jessica and husband Michael, Peter, Kristi, Quinn, Ryan, Patrick, Tyler and wife Jessica, Alana and husband John, Holly, Kelly, Nick, and Andrew.

She was preceded in death by her loving husband Herb. She was, and is, loved, and will be missed.