

Rebecca "Becky" Knudsen Undem



Family and friends of Rebecca Donell (Knudsen) Undem are invited to participate in any or all activities celebrating her life at 11:00am Saturday, October 2, 2021 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Viborg, SD with burial at Bethania Cemetery next to her parents. Becky died during, but not of, the Covid-19 pandemic on August 7, 2020, but pandemic restrictions at that time prevented a funeral service and reception. In spite of the current surge in pandemic cases, we will proceed. The service will be live streamed for those still not vaccinated or for those concerned with pandemic health and safety issues. The Lutheran Order of Service for the Burial of the Dead will be conducted at Bethany Lutheran Church in Viborg from 11:00 to 11:45 (approximate ending time). Interment of ashes will be at Bethania Cemetery 3 miles west of Viborg from 12:00

to 12:20 pm. A Celebration of Life Luncheon is planned immediately after, also at Bethany. The family thanks all those who gave flowers and memorials at the time of Becky's cremation in August 2020, and requests that in lieu of flowers, those still wishing to contribute might consider a donation to Sacred Heart Children's Hospital, 101 W 8th Ave, Spokane WA 99204. Arrangements by Hofmeister-Jones Funeral Home.

Rebecca (Becky) D (Knudsen) Undem was born in Yankton, South Dakota (SD) to Fred and Arlette Knudsen, who farmed near Viborg, SD at the time of her birth on 17 Sep 51. She was the fourth of six children resulting from that union. She attended country school until age 5, at which time her father Fred, a WWII veteran who served in MacArthur's 6th Army, became postmaster in Viborg, a position held from 1956 to 1985.

Becky attended elementary school and high school in Viborg. In the 4th grade, completely unknown to all at the time, she met her future husband, Halvor (Hal) Andrew Undem, son of George Elvin (GE) and Rachel Undem, Lutheran Minister and wife who served small town Northern Plains communities from 1950 to 1972. The Undems, also a family with six children, and the Knudsens got together many times, the Knudsens being members of Bethany Lutheran Church, pastored by GE Undem, who confirmed both Hal and Becky at Bethany in 1966 be-

fore moving to Sherman SD.

After attending some college, Becky was married to Hal on 5 August 1972, again at Bethany Lutheran Church, Viborg, and the couple moved to Brookings, SD, where Hal completed His Bachelor's in Engineering Physics at South Dakota State University, obtaining that degree and a commission in the United States Air Force in December 1973. Becky, meanwhile, worked at the Brookings 3M Medical Products Plant.

Moving to Grand Forks, ND in January 1974, Hal embarked on a Master's Degree in Physics Program at UND, while Becky worked as a teller at First National Bank. The couple departed Grand Forks, and the Northern Plains, when Hal was called to USAF active duty in July 1977, Kirtland AFB, NM being their first active duty assignment.

The Air Force years of Hal and Becky spanned 1977 to 1999, counting both active duty and reserve time periods. Assignments included Kirtland AFB, NM; Wright-Patterson AFB, OH; Patrick AFB, FL; Montgomery AFB, AL; Defense Nuclear Agency, VA; and Offutt AFB, NE. Becky accomplished many things during these years. Earning her Bachelor's Degree in Education from Wright State University, OH in 1983 at the age of 32, she was named the Outstanding Graduate of the College of Education during her graduation ceremony. While living on base during our Kirtland through Patrick AFB years,

she was choir director for several protestant chapel choirs. Having an outstanding singing voice, she once sang Sandi Patti's Was It A Morning Like This for the Easter sunrise service at Patrick AFB just as a glorious sun was rising over the Atlantic. Until assigned to Patrick, the Atlantic was the first ocean she had ever seen.

Struggling with infertility, the couple adopted Julia Susann in 1983 while at Wright Patterson and Joseph Samuel in 1986 while at Patrick. Emily Rebecca, completely unexpected, came along due to natural causes in 1990, just as the couple was transitioning from the active duty Air Force to Richland, WA, where Hal accepted employment in the National Security Directorate at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, a Department of Energy National Laboratory.

Two more "children" arrived in 1994 as a result of the Bosnian war. Zoran and Zvezdana Milinkov, refugees from Tuzla, Bosnia-Hercegovina, arrived in our home to stay there just some 90 days, but reside now in our hearts and lives forever.

From 2004 to 2009, the couple was "assigned" to Vienna, Austria, where Hal worked at the International Atomic Energy Agency and Becky homeschooled Emily from the ages of 13 to 18, using as parts of the "curriculum" the art and history of much of Europe.

Throughout these years, Becky continued her own educa-

Undem, Rebecca "Becky" (Knudsen)
September 17, 1951
Viborg, SD
August 7, 2020
Burial Oct. 2, 2021 at Viborg

Viborg Enterprise Sept. 30, 2021

tional career, teaching at Liberty Christian School in Richland, obtaining a Master's Degree in Education from Heritage College in 1999, and becoming an Adjunct Professor of Mathematics at Columbia Basin College where she taught algebra and other courses from 2002 to 2004, and again from 2009 - 2020 before retiring from there after Spring Quarter 2020.

Becky is survived by her husband, Hal, her 3 children Julia, Joseph, and Emily, and her children of the heart, Zoran and Zvezdana. Her grandchildren include Zachary, Andrew and Hadley. Grandchildren of the heart include David and Rebecca Milinkov. She is also survived by her 5 siblings, Mary Ann, Linda, Stanley, Ramona, and Don.

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