Faye Olson-Sandvig

Faye Olson-Sandvig (Nettestad) passed away at the Olson family farm on November 12, 2025, at the age of 82. She was cherished by her family and friends, leaving a legacy of warmth, infectious smiles, and loving hugs.

Born in Pelican Rapids on September 9, 1943, Faye was the daughter of Fern (Huseby) and Orville Nettestad. She was baptized and confirmed at South Immanuel Lutheran Church. Her immediate family included her younger brother, Bruce (born in 1951), and her grandmother, Inga Huseby, who lived with them. Faye shared a special bond with her cousins, especially her double cousin, Chet Nettestad. Faye attended a nearby one-room schoolhouse before graduating from Pelican Rapids High School in 1961. A testament to her lifelong grit and love for life, she miraculously survived a serious horse accident at age five.

Through her parents' friendship with Amy and Gust Olson, Faye fell in love with their youngest son, Johnny, and they married on August 25, 1963. She moved to the Swede side of Hwy 59 so they could make their home on the Olson family farm, where they worked side-by-side. In quick succession, they welcomed four sons: Robert Bruce (1964), Michael John (1966), Karl Fredrick (1968), Peter Daniel (1972).

Faye managed the household and worked in the barn, which included washing the milkers, feeding the calves, and ensuring her family was fed and clothed, all while keeping her rambunctious boys out of too much trouble. Harvest time was a favorite, with relatives coming to help bale, and sharing the corn harvest with Johnny's best friend, Edward (Junior) Johnson. When the men were in the field, Faye loved to bring out baskets of her home cooking for lunch.

She and Johnny enjoyed annual wedding anniversary celebrations with Junior and his wife, Joanne. They also looked forward to the Erhard 4th of July celebration, followed by picnics at Chester and Shirley Nettestad's lake cabin on Lida, a tradition the Olsons and Nettestads continue to share. Sunday evening supper at her parents' home, "bookended" each week.

Tragedy struck on December 5, 1982, when Johnny passed away unexpectedly at age 44, just one month after the death of Faye's father, Orville. With four boys under 18, Faye was buoyed by the immense love and support of her extended family, friends, and neighbors. Although milking ceased, she was determined to keep the farm and land intact for future generations.

Over the years, Faye worked various jobs in Pelican Rapids, including the Millpond café, where she met her second husband, Alan (Al) Sandvig. Faye and Al settled into life together on the farm, balancing their professions with their growing family. When they had time, they enjoyed cross-country road trips to visit family and friends in the Southwest and Pacific Northwest. At home, they worked on farm improvements, with Faye pursuing baking, sewing, and curating family photo albums, and Al pursuing woodworking and house remodeling. They loved hosting the annual deer hunt, for which Faye would rise early to cook a full breakfast for the extended family.

Faye formed a close bond with Al's parents, Leonard and Marie Sandvig, who lived out their golden years next door on the farm. She was overjoyed to welcome her daughters-in-law, Jane (Boen) and Brenda (Haugrud), whom she cherished deeply.

Upon retiring from West Central Turkeys in 2008, Faye immediately took on full-time babysitting for her young granddaughters, Kya and Thea, solidifying a bond she treasured for the rest of her life.

Baking evolved from a passion to an obsession, prompting Al to lovingly remodel the kitchen. For many years, a large strawberry patch provided ample ingredients. More recently, apple pies became a fall staple, thanks to friends and neighbors sharing their harvests; she leaves behind more than 60 pies in her freezer from this season.

Daily visits to town for coffee with friends were a highlight for Faye. She never missed an opportunity to greet a friend or stranger with her bright smile and warm hug. At the farm, coffee and treats around the kitchen table were mandatory, whether you were visiting, delivering mail, collecting the trash, or providing home health—no one left without sitting down and taking treats home. On the serving committee at Central Lutheran, Faye cherished her love for Jesus and her entire church family, and, for Pastor Tobin, she always had a special twinkle in her eyes. Faye also cherished the regular breakfasts and get-togethers with her beloved high school classmates, and she joyfully reported back the latest news to her sons.

Her love for animals deepened as she fed the squirrels and birds on her porch and visited the goats in the barn. Her baking never stopped; even in her last week, Al reported that she woke at 2 AM and baked another dozen pies. Faye and Al made the most of growing old together, deepening their special love, helping each other through the ups and downs.

Faye and Al were profoundly grateful for the support of her brother, Bruce, and sister-in-law, Sheila (Flynn), whose help with appointments, medications, and Bruce's daily coffee visits helped them to remain on the farm.

As proud as she was of her sons, Faye's greatest joy came from her grandchildren: Kya, Jacob, Thea, and Issac. They supplied her with endless happiness and only a little bit of "grandma frustration." She nurtured a special relationship with each of them, seeing their shared love for the farm and sharing a life on the land.

Faye is survived by her loving husband Alan Sandvig; her children: Robert, Michael (Brenda), Karl (Jane), and Peter; her grandchildren: Kya, Jacob, Thea, and Issac; her brother Bruce Nettestad (Sheila); nieces Amy Nettestad, Cindy Olson, and Pam Olson; and nephew David Olson; and several great-nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her first husband, Johnny; her parents, Orville and Fern Nettestad; Johnny's parents, Amy and Gust Olson; Alan's parents, Leonard and Marie Sandvig; her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Robert and Marjorie (Poss) Olson; and her nephew, Gust Nettestad.

Faye loved a good party. If you knew her, her family asks that you help give her one last good one. Visitation will be held at 10:00 AM, and funeral services will be held at 11:00 AM on Friday, November 21, at Central Lutheran Church, rural Pelican Rapids. Lunch will follow the service.

Larson