



## Norma Jean Gudmundson-Bakarich

August 14, 1931 - May 8, 2025

Norma Jean, 93, died peacefully at her home surrounded by her loved ones on May 8, 2025. Norma Jean was born on August 14, 1931, in Roche Harbor, Washington the third of seven children to Emil and Olive (Breidford) Gudmundson. At six weeks old her family moved to Blaine, Washington where she lived until shortly after her marriage to Jim Bakarich, a local Border Patrolman. Being a lifelong Borderite Norma Jean was thrilled to return to Blaine.

Family was at the core of Norma Jean's life, and she was very proud of her Icelandic heritage, even riding on the Blaine Fourth of July float. One of her milestones was her visit to Iceland with her sisters visiting extended relatives. She was extremely close to her siblings. They were always together laughing, cooking, and cheering on the Seattle Mariners and Seahawks. She loved hosting holiday dinners and Church picnics at her home on Blaine Road (where her family lived during a part of her childhood). It was important that there was room for all to enjoy time together.

Norma Jean's husband was transferred shortly after their marriage on December 28, 1953, to Tok Alaska where they resided for 2 years, then onto Danville, Washington. While in Danville her children were born, first Nancy in 1958, then Tim in 1960. Norma Jean was an amazing loving mother to her two children. In 1964 they were transferred to Portland, Oregon where they

remained until Jim's retirement in 1979 when they returned to Blaine. Norma Jean was thrilled to return as she thought of Blaine as home; and soon most of her siblings joined her.

Norma Jean enjoyed several years of being a business partner with her sister Theo Hull, the proud owners of the "Forget-Me-Not Gift Shop". She made many lifelong friends and was named "Businesswoman of the Year" by the Record Journal. Norma Jean was passionate about looking at the positive side of people and causes she believed in. She was most proud of starting a reading program at the primary school in Blaine where volunteers went weekly to read with students.

Norma Jean grew up in the Free Church Unitarian in Blaine, which was very important to her. She served on the board and sang in the Choir for many years. She would say it was "Home". One of her greatest joys was purchasing and donating the Baby Grand Piano in the sanctuary for all to enjoy for years to come.

Norma Jean is survived by her Children: Nancy Bakarich, Tim Bakarich; Grandsons: Scott Bakarich, Shane (Grainne) Bakarich and Great Grandson: Lorcan and Scott and Shane's mother Georgia Bakarich; Sister Lorene Meck, and sister-in-law Anita Gudmundson; many nieces, nephews and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents Emil and Olive Gudmundson; husband Jim Bakarich; sisters: Esther Pedersen, June Vaughn, Margaret Rutherford, Theo Hull and brother Bud Gudmundson.

A special thank you to the Whatcom Hospice Staff, who made the end of mom's life peaceful and the staff at Avista Senior Living (Louisa Place) for many years of love and care.

Norma Jean was laid to rest at Hillsdale Cemetery where her family has also

been buried.

In Lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Free Church Unitarian (1218 Harrison Street, Blaine, WA 98230) or Whatcom Hospice (2800 Douglas Ave, Bellingham, WA 98225)

A celebration of Norma Jean's Life will be Saturday, August 16, 2025, at Free Church Unitarian- 1218 Harrison Ave, Blaine WA at 1:00 PM with refreshments to follow. We hope you can come and honor Norma Jean's amazing Life.

# Tribute Wall

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“ I so remember this very kind lady. I met her at my mom's (Thelma Hendrickson). I'm very sorry to hear of her passing and my prayers are with all who knew and loved her.

Sincerely,  
Rhonda Roe

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**Rhonda Roe** - July 31, 2025 at 12:00 AM