



JoAnne Marie (Maschera) Christensen, 82, peacefully passed away after a battle with pancreatic cancer on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at the Sidney Health Center in Sidney, MT surrounded by loving family.

JoAnne was born on April 8, 1943, to Ruth Marie (Phares) and Alvin "Alvie" August Maschera in Glendive, MT. JoAnne was the eldest of 4 siblings, (Dick, Patti & Emagene) and grew up on a farm between Lambert & Savage. They moved to Savage in November 1952. As a young child, her and her grandmother Angela spent many hours harmonizing with their 2 favorite songs, "You are my Sunshine" and "Blue Skirt Waltz." Music was such an important part of her life, starting with piano lessons at 11 years old. She also played the Alto Saxophone for Savage High School. At the age of 16, she started playing for 1st Lutheran Church services in Savage. She always preferred to do the singing as she had a beautiful voice. She belonged to many school clubs and plays, Rainbow Girls, and was a soloist for several concerts.

Even though she planned to go to college, romance was in the air... On October 15, 1961, she married Elmer C. Christensen, settling into the Savage community. To this union 3 children were born: Vicki, Cheryl and Greg.

In March of 1968, Elmer & JoAnne moved the family to Sidney where Elmer became part owner of D&E Cycle Shop with his brother Dick. JoAnne was a stay-at-home mom but found time to teach Sunday School at Pella Lutheran Church along with being the pianist. She was the "Avon Lady" in Sidney. In August of 1974, she went to work at the Sidney Credit Bureau until she found her niche in 1976 going to work at Johnson Hardware & Furniture. Many will remember her for her many years of service, retiring in June of 1993.

Family and heritage were always something that was instilled in her. Living on a farm during the 1970's gave her opportunity to raise chickens and to have a VERY large garden. Time was well spent canning and butchering chickens every fall. She enjoyed cooking and baking; always willing to try "new recipes." Sometimes those NEW recipes would travel down to the boys at M3 Meats. Dad would always say, "I tried it once, but you do not need to make that again." We will definitely miss the counter of goodies. They loved to entertain, especially at Christmas. Mom and Dad always wanted to make sure that we got together to continue making our traditional ravioli and popcorn balls. Keeping these traditions alive through the generations was very important to them both.

After retiring from work, JoAnne again became the "Avon Lady" and got back to her favorite love, playing the piano/organ for many church services, weddings, funerals and the Christmas programs at Shepherd of the Valley. Church was very important part of her life and she enjoyed serving as Sunday School teacher, and helping with Bible School, Bible Study, and Children's Choir.



She always had time for a cup of coffee and a game or two of Canasta, Whist, or Pinochle with the in-laws. She loved her time spent with her Bunco ladies. The 4th of July and Christmas were very special celebrations for hosting of family and friends. Elmer and JoAnne had the pleasure of taking many trips together, including the PBR yearly, Branson, Nashville, Alaskan cruise with all the family, Panama Canal cruise, and Hawaii.

JoAnne is survived by her children Vicki Criswell, Cheryl (Clay) Moran and Greg (Susan) Christensen; grandchildren Lacey (James) Meissel, Caitlyn Moran (Trevor Brien), Colton Moran (Cassy Schumacher), Colin Moran, Shayla Christensen, Parker Christensen (Riley

Rafferty), Jordan Christensen, Crystal Moran (Jason Coen), Cody Moran, and Kyle Moran; great-grandchildren Letty and Ryker Meissel, Jacob and Allie Coen, Konnor Moran, Asa Burres, and baby boy due in December; siblings Patti Schwenke and Emagene (Chuck) Quinnell; in-laws Larry Christensen and Barb Sanders; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

JoAnne was preceded in death by her loving husband of 63 years, Elmer; parents Alvin and Ruth Maschera; brother Dick Maschera; son-in-law Dave Criswell; in-laws Albert and Maggie Christensen, brothers-in-law Bob Schwenke, Dick Christensen, and Kelly Sanders; and sisters-in-law Renee and Louise Christensen.

How do you sum up 82 years into a short story? We asked the family to describe Mom (Grandma) in one or two words. Here is their story: Resilient, genuinely caring, thoughtful, compassionate, gift for gab, cheerful, loving unconditionally, altruistic, sincere, merciful, loquacious, wise, nurturing, genuine, blessed, positive, devout, warm, empathetic, encouraging, faithful, elegance. And in the words of Dad's workers... "Effing Saint" to put up with our father all those years...

We only had about three short months with Mom and her battle. When she entered SHC, the room they were getting ready for her was the same room Dad had been in just seven short months ago. They asked if we were okay with that and Mom said yes... it's comforting. We want to believe in our hearts that Dad left something behind that day and he came back to get it. Room 206 will always have a special meaning to all of us. We would like to thank the medical staff of Sidney Health Center and Dr. Pedersen and staff, along with the Home Health Team (Heather) for the dedicated medical attention you provided our dear mother.

