

## To Be of Use

The people I love the best  
jump into work head first  
without dallying in the shallows  
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.  
They seem to become natives of that element,  
the black sleek heads of seals  
bouncing like half-submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart  
Who pull like the water buffalo, with massive patience,  
Who strain in the mud and the much to move things forward  
Who to what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge  
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest  
and work in row and pass the bags along,  
who are not parlor generals and field deserters  
but move in a common rhythm  
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.  
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.  
But the thing worth doing well done  
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.  
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,  
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in the museums  
but you know they were made to be used.  
The pitcher cries for water to carry  
and a person for work that is real.



-Marge Piercy

*The family of Opal wishes to thank the staff at Fairway View who were universally warm, loving, and thoughtful. In addition, they would also like to thank family and friends who visited, sent flowers or mailed cards. Every contact was a great comfort to Opal and her family.*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

# Opal Esther Olson

WHO WAS BORN

August 30, 1924  
Ortonville, Minnesota

AND CALLED TO HER ETERNAL HOME

December 20, 2018  
Ortonville, Minnesota

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Saturday, January 19, 2019 - 10:30 a.m.  
First United Methodist Church  
Ortonville, Minnesota

OFFICIANT

Pastor Melanie Reiners

MUSICIAN

Carol Ydstie, Organist  
Jonathan Ydstie, Soloist

URN BEARER

Hana Schutz

HONORARY BEARERS

Leah Meron Malakai Adele Eleanore Oscar

INTERMENT

Clinton City Cemetery  
Clinton, Minnesota

APPRECIATION

Opal's family is grateful for your attendance at this celebration. Your expressions of kindness and love are deeply appreciated. Following the service, please join the family for lunch and fellowship.

ARRANGEMENTS BY

Mundwiler and Larson Funeral Home  
Ortonville, Minnesota

Opal was born in Ortonville, MN, on August 30, 1924, to Fred and Myrtle (Hedge) Griffith. She graduated from Ortonville High School. In 1947, she received an Elementary Education Certificate and began her teaching career in one-room schools. Eighteen years later, after raising her children, Opal returned to school and earned her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Minnesota, Morris, followed by obtaining certification as a special education teacher.

Opal was married to Curtiss Dodds Olson on August 22, 1948. They were married for 70 years.

Opal taught at Rural Districts 10, 12, and 63. She was a special education teacher in the Chokio/Alberta School District for 23 years, retiring in 1989.

Opal was named Teacher of the Year three times throughout her career. She was an active, involved member of the Methodist Church and United Methodist Women. She was an early board member of Main Street Industries and on the founding board of Monarch Heights. Opal was also a member of the Eastern Star and Red Hat Ladies. After her retirement, she volunteered as a reading teacher at Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley Schools and spent many days reading to nursing home residents, quitting only after a stroke rendered her speech difficult to follow. Despite family telling her repeatedly that many decent people start to ease into retirement in their mid-nineties, she worked relentlessly at any task she was capable of undertaking for as long as she could.

Opal loved to read and garden, but her lifelong passion was education. She was fiercely devoted to helping young people and had an open heart (and open pocket-book) for the last and the least, driving her husband to distraction with the numerous charities she wished to support. Her personal Bible had a number of marked passages, but none so prominent as this verse from Amos 5:24: "I want to see a mighty flood of justice – a torrent of doing good."

Opal had a warm heart, a sunny smile, and mischievous eyes that drew people to her the way flowers follow the sun. She gave away books for Halloween and loved champagne at Christmas. She mentored several generations of young people and her list of friends was nearly infinite, limited only by the number of people she had yet to meet. She managed remarkably to mother and grandmother family on two continents, bravely traveling alone to France when needed.

Opal is survived by her husband, Curtiss; sister, Vera Reich; daughters: Alison (Denis) Maraillet, and Myrlah Olson (Joe Samuelson); son, Brent (Robin) Olson; grandchildren: Erica Maraillet (Michael McCutcheon), Claire Maraillet, Emily Samuelson (Garret Vandenburg), Lucas (Talía) Olson, Kate (Nathan) Schutz, and Elizabeth Olson (Chad Geiser); and great-grandchildren: Hana, Leah, Meron, Malakai, Adele, Eleanore, and Oscar. Her nieces, nephews, and extended family are too numerous to name, but she cherished each one. Opal was preceded in death by her parents; brothers: George, Marvin, and Arvin; and sister, Verna Englund.



*A Life Remembered*

Opal Esther Olson  
August 30, 1924 - December 20, 2018