

**Emma Schock Whitaker**  
**November 22, 1917 – May 4, 2014**

Emma was born in a tiny house on the plains of North Dakota, just outside Turtle Lake, where she survived a tornado, a house fire, daily farm chores and a challenging walk uphill to school during North Dakota winters. After graduating from Turtle Lake High School, she worked her way through Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, supporting herself by performing household chores, selling shoes, and working in the print shop for her room and board. She majored in English, graduated in 1942, and headed to Los Angeles, where she landed a job working for the Fireman's Fund Insurance Agency. While depositing the office petty cash at the local branch of the Bank of America one day in 1946, she struck up a light flirtation with the new bank clerk, George Whitaker, a recently demobilized US Army Sergeant. They were married six months later, taking up residence in Whittier where their son David was born in 1947. They later moved to the house on Wells Street in San Gabriel which would be her home for the rest of her life. Their daughter Christe was born in 1951.

Emma was a founding member of Trinity Lutheran Church in San Gabriel, where she faithfully attended services, Bible studies, was a member of several Women's Circles and, in her 70's, taught ESL (English as a Second Language) for her church outreach program. She started an in-home re-weaving business, learned to play then teach organ. She rejoined the outside work force in the late 1960s as a sales clerk and later sewing instructor at a local fabric store to help put her daughter through college. She battled breast cancer in her fifties and survived. This was long before Betty Ford's efforts lifted the taboo of ever discussing or admitting to women having breast cancer.

Based on her upbringing and not one to be daunted by any kind of challenge, Emma did her own yard work, to include mowing, hedge trimming and such. She learned how and built bookshelves in her home, painted her home inside and out, unplugged the sewer system, (not just the toilet but the entire house sewer system), and, until she was 72, changed the oil in her car which, at one time, got away from her, knocking out patio roof supports.

At the age of 62, at the insistence of her son (who took her typewriter away from her), she learned computer word processing which she then used to translate over 300 letters and documents from her mother's diary from German into English and which Martin then assembled into a family book thereby preserving precious Schock family heritage. In 1985 she was delighted to be able to finally travel to Germany for several weeks where she met with some of her mother's correspondents and other relatives still living there.

Emma is preceded by her husband of 61 years, George, her seven brothers, Jake, Gustav, John, Emil, Alec, Danny, and Reinhold (Reiny), and her sister Helen. She is survived by her son David, grandson Jon-Michael, great-grandson Ryan; and her daughter Christe Ann McMenemy, grandchildren Mary, David, and Sarah; and many nieces and nephews, many of whom traveled to Turtle Lake in November of 2012 to celebrate with her on her 95th birthday.

Emma endured many hardships during her last years but her strength allowed her to be a faithful wife and raise her children according to her devoutly held religious beliefs. She will be greatly missed by all.

Emma was 96 years old and had been struggling with dementia and heart issues for several years. In November of 2013 a fall left her hospitalized for six weeks. In early 2014 she returned to her San Gabriel home and passed away peacefully the evening of May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 with both of her children by her side.

As was her wish no formal services were to be held. She has been cremated and will be placed to rest with her parents in the Turtle Lake Cemetery in North Dakota. Any donations in her honor may be made directly to Trinity Lutheran Church of San Gabriel at 6868 N San Gabriel Blvd, San Gabriel CA, 91775.