



## Ingrid Berta Martin

October 18, 1929 - July 2, 2024

Ingrid Berta Martin (our Oma) was born on October 18, 1929, in Mannheim, Germany. She went home to God on July 2, 2024, in Tampa, Florida. We know Oma is alive in each of us and we also miss her in a way that the written word cannot touch. She was our matriarch and our foundation, a force unlike any other.

Oma was the kind of woman who saw a tree she liked on the side of the road, went home, got a shovel, and dug it up to replant it in her yard. She was known to flip a board game. She loved liverwurst sandwiches, German cold cuts, medium rare (mostly rare) steak, and chocolate of all varieties. She was well-read, deeply organized, and exacting. She was married for over 59 years. She was a deeply loyal person and friend. She buried her pets herself when they died, she forged for wild mushrooms (and didn't poison anyone—a miracle), she played bridge quite well, and she took a long walk almost everyday of her life. She was brave to the point of defiant.

Her home was our family's heartbeat, spotless and transportive; a European chalet inside a circa 1956 ranch style house in Tullahoma, Tennessee. Over her sixty-seven years in her 1,500 square foot home at 105 Wildwood Drive, She regularly hosted beautiful dinner parties for twelve, tended her huge and glorious flower beds, watched for Hummingbirds and fireflies, and made thousands of batches of German Christmas cookies in the original 1956 oven. She spoke fluent German and English. She never met a stranger and she could talk to anyone. She loved terrier mutts (favorites included Toto, Moxie,

and Lily) and she believed in the transformative power of naps, hot tea, and letter writing. She cooked with bacon and butter and heavy cream. She loved licorice. She was sort of mean, but in a European way that made her gentleness with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren even more tender. Oma was Born about ten years before World War II ravaged her home and the world. Her family was affluent. One of her toddler photos shows her being pulled in an elegant, toddler sized carriage yoked to a fancy goat. She had pet birds. Her mother was Anna Schwartz Winkler, and her father, Karl Adam Winkler. She had an older brother, Reiner, who she loved dearly.

The onset of World War II changed Oma's life dramatically. Her parents separated and divorced. Her beloved brother was conscripted to a war their family did not in any way support or want. Her family's wealth scattered. Her friends, many Jewish, and her family, home, and pets were bombed and fled. Many died. She was a young girl.

Oma, her mother, and grandmother escaped the bombing and sheltered somewhere in the rural German countryside near France. She found work as a nanny for a widowed farmer's small children. The farmer paid her in potatoes that she was allowed to dig up and cart "home" each weekend to her mother and grandmother. Her brother was captured and imprisoned but ultimately survived the war. With no forwarding address and no home, he somehow found and reunited with Oma with the help of their former nanny. To her death, Oma deeply believed in the power of "common people" who showed her and her family countless acts of lifesaving generosity during those war years.

We have no doubt that the war changed Oma in ways we cannot begin to understand. Strangely, it also made us. Oma met and subsequently married a handsome young American soldier who was deployed to help rebuild in Germany.

His name was Robert Lewis Martin. He was an orphaned boy from Columbia County, Tennessee who grew up passed between loving but very poor family members in Appalachia during the Depression. He was gorgeous, resourceful,

and funny (so was she). He won over her highly skeptical mother and grandmother, both of whom knew this potential marriage would take Oma away from them and away from Germany. They softened to him but mourned this too.

Oma and Opa married in Germany on December 4, 1948, and began the long trip to the United States. Oma Cooked Opa breakfast, lunch, and dinner almost every day of their married life. They survived his deployment in the Korean War where he earned a Purple Heart. They fought and they laughed, and they traveled, and they worked. They built an incredible life and home together. They had two truly gorgeous children; first Ralph Bernd Martin and later Virginia Ann Martin (Lohn). They built a community of friends, in part through Trinity Lutheran Church, and much later, through Faith Lutheran Church. Oma's love for her child-raising friends (especially Janet), her ADC friends, her shopping friends (Lisa), her swimming friends, her bridge friends, her gardening friends (Moe) and so on, was profound. In addition to her marriage, her children, and her family, the way Oma loved her friends and her neighbors (and the way they loved her in return) was one of her life's greatest joys.

We struggle to end this Obituary for Oma. Her life was so full of color and texture. We will always remember the rooms in her house, the pullcord light bulb in the closet, the elegant white embossed wallpaper on her creaking hall cabinets, the chirping birds and twiggy nests in the eaves of Opa's shop, the cracking hot woodstove, the ever-filled glass mug of pretzel rods, the soft den, the gazebo surrounded by hydrangeas, the truly teeny-tiny kitchen from which she constantly shooed us out. We will remember her gift for storytelling, her sort of otherworldly inner strength, and the way we each really honest to God believed we were her favorite.

We will remember the annual Christmas gingerbread houses she built and decorated for hours and hours only to watch us feverishly consume in minutes like a bunch of velociraptors. We will remember the repurposed margarine and

Cool Whip tubs full of M-and-M's and snowcaps and other delicious candies; one for each of us. We will remember sitting in the gazebo with her eating cheese straws and listening to the windchimes. We will remember Christmases with dustings of snow on the fence Opa built. We will remember the little window prism Oma hung in the dining room that threw tiny, dancing rainbows across her ironed white tablecloths. We will remember the glass animals we were only allowed to play with at the dining room table. We will remember how cold the water came out of the bathroom faucet and how "our" beds each had their own tiny light on the wall for reading and for comfort at night.

Our happiest memories were moment she created for us. She always said the key to hosting was to do all the work beforehand, so you too could enjoy the company. We hope she enjoyed us even a fraction as much as we enjoyed her.

Her favorite bible passages were John 14:1-7,27; Isaiah 40:28-31; and Psalm 23. Her favorite hymns were "For all the saints who from their Labor rest," "A Mighty Fortress is our God," and "Old Rugged Cross." We will celebrate her huge and beautiful life in October of 2024 in Tullahoma. Our deep gratitude to her many friends and family members (especially Virginia and Mel) and neighbors (especially Suzie) who helped her live as long as possible in her beloved Tullahoma home. She will be laid to rest at the Shofner Cemetery located at 2896 U.S. 41A, Wartrace, Tennessee. She is survived by daughter Virginia Martin Lohn (Mel), son Ralph Martin (Leigh), Margo Martin; grandchildren Mitchell Martin, Jake Martin (Daphne), Brandy Mills Martin, Sasha Lohn (Gary Weisman), Anjuli Lohn Davis (Charles), and Martin Lohn (Jennifer). She is predeceased in death by her husband, Robert Lewis Martin, her parents, her brother, and her beloved great-grandson Campbell Martin. She is survived by great-grandchildren Mills Martin, Watts Martin, Reagan Martin, Weston Martin, Blakely Martin, Maddy Martin, Hawkins Martin, Elodie Davis, Charlie Davis, Collins Davis, Alex Fevos, Savannah Lohn, Charlotte Lohn, and William Martin Weisman.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests that memorial contributions be made to Faith Lutheran Church or Tullahoma Animal Shelter.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

OCT **26**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Faith Lutheran Church  
Tullahoma, TN