

Be Ba (Añh) Gietzen

FUNERAL MASS:

Saturday, January 22, 2022 10:30 am
St. Clement Oratory
Haymarsh, North Dakota

ROSARY & VIGIL:

Friday, January 21, 2022 6:00 pm
St. Clement Oratory
Haymarsh, North Dakota
Deacon Brent Naslund

CELEBRATING:

Father Gary Benz

MUSIC:

Christi Kuhlka & Andrew Jacobson

SERVERS:

Simon Jacobson & Eli Gietzen

READER:

Gabe Gietzen

GIFT BEARERS:

All of Añh's Grandchildren

PALLBEARERS:

All of Añh's Grandsons

INTERMENT:

St. Clement Cemetery
Haymarsh, North Dakota

ARRANGEMENTS BY:

Stevenson Funeral Home
Glen Ullin, North Dakota

*Lunch will be served in the Sacred Heart Parish
Hall following the graveside service.
Everyone is welcome.*

Añh Gietzen

May 12, 1950 - January 18, 2022



Be Ba (Añh) Gietzen passed away in her home January 18, 2022, after a long battle with dementia.

She is survived by her husband, Russell; seven children, adopted son Milton, Gabriel (Maria), Medora (Marty), Monica (Andrew), Raphael (Nicole), Luke, Agatha; and her 22 grandchildren.

She was born sometime after Tet (the lunar new year) in Binh-Ninh, South Vietnam in 1950. She acquired an alias at an early age. Her mother, Tran thi Nhan, was a fan of a famous Vietnamese country singer named Ngoc Añh. So she named her daughter Tran (family name) thi (gender) Ngoc (diamond) Añh (sparkling).

Her father, Tran van Bay, was engaged in combat operations as an infantry officer with the French-backed army, fighting the Viet-Minh. Of necessity, his wife lived in her father-in-law's house with his young wife who also had a little daughter about a month older than Añh. At the time that country was very patriarchal and on May 12, 1950 the grandfather recorded the births.

In Vietnam the mother is always considered number one. So he named them little girl (Be) number two (Hai) and number three (Ba). When applying for a passport and visa, the thumbprint didn't match Ngoc Añh. So after some delay and red tape and special fees, an affidavit was required to show that Tran thi Be Ba and Tran thi Ngoc Añh was indeed one person and she was then allowed to travel to the United States on a fiancée visa where she married Russell Gietzen in the St. Clement Church, north of Glen Ullin, on December 6, 1971.

She suffered extreme homesickness and in February 1975 she took a charter flight back home for a one month visit. While

home, the communist forces cut her home province off from Saigon. Her mother had a double cousin who was in charge of the sewer and water works in Saigon. The communists needed people like him so he was able to get a special coded pass on his Jeep. He was able to go through all the ambushes and checkpoints, down to My-Tho and pick up Añh. He had three college daughters that he hoped could study in the United States. He sent their birth certificates with Añh but the communist takeover happened too quickly. April 25, 1975 they ended up studying in Poland.

The next 15 years were very hard for Añh. We lost all contact with her family and didn't know if they survived or not. After the Berlin Wall came down, she was able to get a "black" flight with 130 other war brides and she found her family absolutely destitute. Russell had sold two teams of horses and a neighbor lady sewed a hidden liner for her blouse. She had sixty \$100 bills hidden on her person. After several close calls, she found her family who had been relocated to the remnant of their ancestral estate which had been reduced from about a township to 2 acres.

The day she got home in 1990, just at dark, her mother buried the money in fruit jars in their garden. The next day communist police fleeced Añh and threatened her and literally tore up the thatch house looking for money.

In 2000, Añh and her daughter Monica went back legally because now there was an embassy again. She was so pleased to see that her mother was able to build a very nice house that became a hub of security for the whole family.

Meanwhile, Añh was quite shrewd, business-wise and went into the Holstein heifer business. From 1987-1993 she served on the Morton County FMHA board, and kept trying to rent more pasture here and there and update

machinery. When her children were mostly grown she started cooking for the Red Trail Grill in Taylor which featured an oriental night on Thursday for several years. In 2005, she started working for the Marian Manor nursing home as a CNA and endeared herself with the community by her compassionate care of the elderly.

She and Russell paid off a 40 year farm loan in 37 years, becoming debt free in 2013. In 2014 her health began to fail and she had to retire.

In a moment of clarity, after hearing The Little Blue Stems play, she said, "I never thought we'd do it, but we got debt free. I was able to help my family when they were in great need and my 'pipe dream' of a family band came true with my grandchildren. Now dear Lord you may dismiss your servant in peace."

By Russell Gietzen

