



Isabel “Belle” Twitchell



June 17, 1933 ~ November 14, 2025

Isabel “Belle” Twitchell (née Malabanan), age 92, passed away peacefully on November 14, 2025, in Tracy, California. A devoted educator, loving mother and grandmother, and cherished member of her community, Belle’s life was marked by deep commitment to family, faith, and service.

Born on June 17, 1933, in Los Baños, Laguna, in the Philippines, Belle was one of nine siblings. Her early years were shaped by a strong sense of family and a dedication to education that would guide her throughout her life. She earned her degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of the Philippines, where she also became a Fulbright Scholar and met her future husband, Warren Twitchell, in 1954. Warren was an American student studying agriculture abroad with aspirations of becoming a dairy farmer. Their connection blossomed quickly, and they married the following year in 1955. Shortly after their wedding, Belle and Warren moved to the United States so Warren could complete his senior year at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. There, they welcomed their first daughter, Belinda, in 1956. The family then relocated to Rochester, New York—Warren’s hometown—where they lived next door to his parents and celebrated the birth of their second daughter, Diane, in 1957. In 1962, seeking new opportunities and closer ties with family already in the U.S., Belle and Warren moved their young family to San Francisco. They initially stayed with Belle’s sister Rosa before settling in Daly City. During this time, Belle pursued her teaching credentials at the University of California, San Francisco, while Warren earned his Master’s degree in Educational Administration. Their shared passion for education became a cornerstone of their lives.



In 1970, the Twitchells moved to Tracy, California. Warren became Principal of North Elementary School while Belle began her long and impactful teaching career in the Tracy Unified School District. She taught at El Portal Elementary School before moving to South Elementary School as a third-grade teacher for many years. Later she transferred to Jacobson Elementary School where she continued teaching third grade until her retirement in 2001. Over more than three decades of service as an educator—including earlier work as a substitute teacher for special education students in Daly City—Belle touched countless lives with her dedication and warmth and was even recognized in the *Who’s Who Among American Teachers* publication.

Many of her former students would later see her in town and remark “You were my favorite teacher!” Her degree in economics had also paid off since students would often recall the simulated economy incentive system that she would use in her classroom where she could be remembered to say: “No work, no pay!”. She also had a strong love of music, enjoyed singing and dabbling with playing on her piano and often played classical music in the background during her classroom instruction. Outside the classroom, Belle was known for her vibrant personality and infectious humor. Jovial by nature and always ready with a joke or witty remark, she brought laughter wherever she went, and those who had heard her sing would often say she had the “voice of angel”. She also had a deep love for crocheting and knitting—skills she shared generously through her involvement with the prayer shawl knitting group at First Presbyterian Church in Tracy. A faithful member of the congregation for many years, Belle even served as a deacon and formed close bonds with fellow parishioners through worship and fellowship. Evenings often found Belle watching television programs like *Jeopardy!*, rarely missing an episode and frequently answering questions with such accuracy that loved ones believed she could have been a contestant herself.

For over a decade, her loyal dog Alpie was her constant companion—a source of comfort and joy during her later years.

She was also extremely close with her grandchildren Natalie and Jameson “Sonny”, who became her primary caregivers during her final days. Her Hospice Nurse Desiree was also a strong support and shared a special bond with her during her last few months on this earth.

Belle was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Warren Twitchell and their daughter Belinda.

She is lovingly remembered by her daughter, Diane; granddaughter, Natalie Morejohn and Natalie’s partner, Dave Costa; grandson, Jameson “Sonny” Morejohn; and by all those whose lives were brightened by her kindness, humor, and unwavering spirit.

May Isabel “Belle” Twitchell’s memory bring comfort to all who knew and loved her. It was Belle’s wish not to have any formal funeral memorial services, though the family may organize a Celebration of Life gathering to be held at a later date. Belle will be interred next to her daughter Belinda

at the local Tracy Cemetery, and in lieu of gifts or flowers, donations can be made in her name to her local church:

The First Presbyterian Church of Tracy, California.

