



Micah 6:8

***No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good,
and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right,
to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.***



In Loving Memory

LaVern Charles Neff

Born to Charles & Martha Neff
January 17, 1927 ~ Rural McClusky, North Dakota

Called Home to His Heavenly Father
October 13, 2019 ~ Bismarck, North Dakota

Funeral Service
Saturday, October 19, 2019 at 11:00 am
Faith United Methodist Church~ Williston, North Dakota

Officiating
Pastor Mike Skor

Eulogist
Charles L. Neff

Scripture Reader
Barbara Nash

Poem Reader
Donna Neff

Music
Ann Holman ~ Organist

Pallbearers
Laura Dronen Brian Jesteadt David Jesteadt
Eric Jesteadt Alexander Nash David Nash
Matthew Neff Miranda Neff

Honorary Pallbearers
Tara Erickstad Kristine Neff Benjamin Nash

Military Honors
North Dakota Veteran's Honor Guard

Final Resting Place
Riverview Cemetery ~ Williston, North Dakota

Arrangements By
Fulkerson Stevenson Funeral Home ~ Williston, ND



In Loving Memory Of

LaVern Charles Neff

"Vern"



January 17, 1927 - October 13, 2019



LaVern C. (Vern) Neff, 92, died peacefully, surrounded by family, Sunday morning, October 13, 2019, after having lived a long life of love, kindness, generosity and service.

Son of Charles G. and Martha (Schindler) Neff, Vern was born January 17, 1927, on the kitchen table of his grandparents' farmhouse outside of McClusky during a howling blizzard. Raised in and around McClusky, he was class

Salutatorian, but did not attend his graduation ceremony, having already enlisted and headed for basic training at Ft. Benning, GA. Mr. Neff served in the active military from 1944-1946 as a member of the 11th Airborne Division, 503 PIR, attaining the rank of S/Sgt, and from 1946-1952 in the US Army Reserves as a 1st Lt.



While in training, he saved the life of a fellow paratrooper whose parachute failed to deploy by grabbing the fellow's harness as he went by. Mr. Neff spent time in the Philippines, before being stationed in Sendai, Japan, as part of MacArthur's occupation forces. Mr. Neff enjoyed his time in Sendai and enjoyed the Japanese people.

Continuing his life of service while on campus, Vern served as president

of the ATO fraternity and Associate Editor of the N. D. Law Review. He noted that sometimes service has unexpected rewards. While volunteering as escort for new freshman arrivals to campus, he met the lovely Juanita Jones from Wyndmere at the train station and the rest, as they say, is history. Vern and Juanita married on June 4th, 1950. The couple moved to Williston in 1952, where they raised three children, Donna, Barbara and Charles. Both remained active in their community until Vern's health concerns moved them to Bismarck in 2015.

Vern received his BA in Commerce in 1949 and his Juris Doctor in 1952, after which the couple moved to Williston, following the advice of Juanita's boss at the time, Dr. Wilson Laird, the ND State Geologist, who foresaw the coming oil boom in Western ND.

First serving as Assistant States Attorney under Telmer Rolfstad, Mr. Neff joined the law firm that became Bjella, Jestrab, Neff and Pippin, presently Neff, Eiken, Neff, where he practiced oil and gas, estate and commercial law for 58 years before his grudging retirement in 2009.

Throughout his professional and personal life, Mr. Neff assumed leadership roles in many and various organizations. He was an active member of Faith UMC, Past Post Commander, Edgar M. Boyd Post #37 of the American Legion, Past Exalted Ruler, Williston B.P.O.E., Chairman of the North Dakota State Historical Society and President of the State Bar Association. He served on the board of the Williston State College Foundation, Mercy Medical Center, James Memorial Library, American State Bank and Trust, ND Council on the Arts and Humanities, ND State Parks Advisory Committee, Yellowstone-Missouri Fort Union Confluence Committee and was an early participant in the Ft. Buford 6th Infantry. In addition, he served on the Policy Council for Head Start, the Industrial Development Committee and the Lewis and Clark Trail Advisory Council. Mr. Neff also served as Governor Link's appointee to the ND Centennial Commission and Governor Olson's appointee to represent North Dakota on the Interstate Oil Compact Commission.

Mr. Neff was director of the State Historical Society during the creation and planning of the North Dakota Heritage Center, and was a founding and incorporating member of the North Dakota Germans from Russia Historical Society, the Frontier Museum Society, Williams County Historical Society, Williston Jobs & Industries, Inc., and the Dakotas United Methodist Foundation.

In recognition of his hard work and dedication, Mr. Neff received the North Dakota Jaycees Distinguished Service award in 1958, a Distinguished Service Award from the State Bar Association of North Dakota in 1987 and later the Williston Chamber of Commerce Western Star Award in 2001. He was also very pleased to receive Boss of the Year award in 1972.

Vern did all these things, not for the honors that eventually followed, but as a reflection of his abiding Christian faith, inherent drive and his deeply held belief that our true purpose as human beings and followers of Christ was to always leave things, whether person, place or thing, in some way better than you found it.

Vern was also a hand's on father to his three children.

Many family adventures have become legendary, such as spinning cookies on the ice or driving our VW bug backwards through the zoo's tiny train tunnel. Other outdoor adventures included climbing buttes (and then picking out cactus needles), family outings on the boat and later at the family cabin, enjoying beautiful Lake Sakakawea. Vern also enjoyed auctions, stock car racing, rock collecting and to his last days, enjoyed feeding squirrels and maintained an avid interest in coin collecting.

Vern is survived by his loving wife of 69 years, Juanita. In-laws: Audrey (Don) Neff, Lois (Harold) Neff, Bonnie (Robert) Neff and Tom (Janet) Wentz. Three children: Donna (Walt Jesteadt) Neff, Omaha, Barbara (David) Nash, Bismarck, and Charles (Sherry) Neff, Williston. Ten grandchildren: David (Monica Monzingo) Jesteadt, Los Angeles, CA, Eric (Tiffany) Jesteadt, Arlington, VA, Brian Jesteadt, Omaha, NE, Laura (Jon) Dronen, Hazen, ND, Benjamin (Meghan) Nash, Edmonds, WA, Alexander Nash, Poughkeepsie, NY, Kristine Neff, Tulsa, OK, Matthew (Sarah) Neff, Tulsa, OK, Miranda Neff, Sand Springs, OK, Tara (Samuel) Erickstad, Williston. The Neff's also have 11 great grandchildren, Sidney, Cordelia, Elliott, Caitlin, Dillon, Kaia, Margaret, Lucas, Jordan, Penelope and Vance.

Vern was preceded in death by his parents, Charles G. and Martha (Schindler) Neff, and siblings Dorothy Ostrom, Donald, Harold, Robert and Richard Neff and Janet Wentz.

The family would like to sincerely thank the staff of Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center as well as Dr. Louise Murphy, Eric Lutzwick and the doctors and staff of CHI St. Alexius for their loving and compassionate care during these past several years, gifting us with so many 'bonus' days with our beloved husband, dad and grandpa. Thank you.

Family suggests memorials to the Williston State College Foundation, Box 1286, Williston 58802, Heritage Foundation for Germans from Russia (HFGR), 1125 W Turnpike Ave, Bismarck 58501 or the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) Foundation, PO Box 1976, Bismarck 58501.

Thank you for joining us to celebrate Vern's life and mourn his loss. If you have ever visited the North Dakota Heritage Museum, Fort Buford, Fort Union, or any of our wonderful state parks, or perhaps received a scholarship from the Alva J. Field Foundation, received services at Mercy Hospital in Williston, or researched your ancestors through the HFGR, then you, too, share Vern's legacy.

Sleight of Season

The days of Autumn
Linger golden in the sun,
Writing in flame the message
That Summer's days are done.

Gilded leaves tremble and fall,
Tumbling through the air,
Then congregate and whisper,
Until all the trees are bare.

Pages of our calendars whirl
As the years go slipping by,
Sleight of Season being
Quicker than the eye,

But there are moments
That walk instead of run,
While the days of Autumn
Linger golden in the sun.

Juanita Jones Neff

*"The final test of a leader is that he leaves
behind him in other men the conviction
and the will to carry on"*

Walter Lippman

