



Clifford E. Sovereign

April 21, 1927 - April 3, 2022

Clifford E. Sovereign, 94 of Kearney passed away Sunday, April 3, 2022 at Mt. Carmel Keens Memorial Home in Kearney. Funeral services will be 11:00 a.m. Thursday, April 7, 2022 at O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home in Kearney with Pastor Steve Shanno officiating. Interment will follow at Kearney Cemetery with military honors provided by the American Legion Post #52 and VFW Post #719 in conjunction with the U.S. Navy Funeral Honors Team. Visitation will be held 5:00 to 7:00 pm Wednesday at the funeral home.

Cliff was born April 21, 1927, on a ranch in the Sandhills of Holt County, Nebraska near Swan Lake, the son of Cecil and Edith Sovereign. His parents moved to Royal in Antelope County when he was four years old, and he grew up and graduated there in May of 1944.

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in June 1944. Cliff spent boot camp in Great Lakes Naval Camp and from there to signal school in Bainbridge, Maryland. He finished training in spring of 1945 and was sent to the Philippines, assigned to an admiral's crew aboard the USS Detroit. The admiral was in charge of a naval fleet off the coast of Japan for the rest of WWII. When the USS Detroit was invited to the surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945, because it had been in Pearl Harbor when Japan attacked at the beginning of the war, Cliff got to witness that history.

After the surrender, the Detroit was stationed in Tokyo until the end of October, when the ship was routed through the Panama Canal to Philadelphia for decommissioning. From there Cliff was sent to Adak in the Aleutian Islands, where he was assigned to ships carrying messages and supplies to other islands. In spring the ship was sent back to Bremerton, WA for repair, and he spent a lot of Liberty in Seattle and the Puget Sound area until his discharge in July.

Upon returning home Cliff enrolled under the GI bill in Wayne State Teacher's College, where he was on the boxing team and twice was NCC lightweight champion. He served as president of the college YMCA and Sigma Tau Delta (National English honorary). In his freshman English class, he met Elaine Peters. They dated for just over a year and were married November 24, 1948. They both graduated in 1950, Cliff as magna cum laude and Elaine as summa cum laude.

Their son Kenneth was born in July 1950. Cliff became a teacher and coach at Obert, NE for one year before taking the same position at Ansley, and later as principal there, too. Daughter Susan was born in 1953. After 4 years there while working on his graduate degree in school administration at Kearney, plus one year at Riverdale, he became superintendent and coach at Miller and then Eddyville. Kathy, 1957, and Nancy, 1959, added to the family. The Sovereigns moved to Brule in 1962, with Cliff as superintendent and coach, and in 1968 Cliff became superintendent at Axtell for 9 years. From there he moved to Sumner as S-E-M superintendent and girls' basketball coach. In his third year the girl's team was undefeated and state class D champions (1980). He retired from teaching in 1986, and moved back to Brule, later serving as Keith County Superintendent for a few years. Cliff suffered a heart attack in 2005, after which they moved to Kearney.

The Sovereigns enjoyed travel, camping, hunting, fishing, and entertaining at

their much-loved cabin at Lake McConaughy. He enjoyed woodwork and carving birds, and he presented bird and poetry programs to senior centers, schools, and organizations in and around Kearney. He and Elaine sponsored dances, directed garage sales, and served as volunteer librarians at the former Senior Center. Cliff loved reading, gardening, Cornhusker football, ice cream, and westerns in books, on TV, and in the movies. His world changed dramatically when Elaine passed away in 2020.

Cliff passed away April 3, 2022 in Kearney at the age of 94. He is survived by his son, Ken & Marcia Sovereign of Hastings; daughter, Sue & Ed Furman of Omaha; daughter, Kathy & Ron Eckloff of Kearney; daughter, Nancy & Dave Klimek of Grand Island; grandchildren, Kristin (Sovereign) Adkins, Amy Sovereign, Brent Sovereign, Luke Furman, Andrew Furman, Abby (Furman) Haller, Emily (Eckloff) Jameson, Jill (Eckloff) Turner, Bethany (Eckloff) Rouse, Joel Eckloff, Ed Klimek, Allison Klimek, Tara Klimek; great-grandchildren, Evan Adkins, Jacob Adkins, Jenna Adkins, Alexis Haller, Wyatt Haller, Evander Furman, Owen Furman, Kayla Jameson, Zachary Jameson, Alyssa Jameson, Olivia Jameson, Lily Turner, Wesley Turner, Everett Rouse, step-grandchildren Ellisa, Tatyana, Talon, and Hayden Klimek.

Cliff was preceded in death by his wife, Elaine, granddaughter Dusty Klimek, his parents, and his siblings Gordon Sovereign, Nona (Sovereign) Nelson, and Mary (Sovereign) Eley.

Memorials are suggested to the family for future designation. Condolences may be shared online at www.osrfh.com. Services are entrusted to O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral and Cremation Services..

Cemetery Details

Kearney Cemetery

4400 Avenue I
Kearney, NE 68847
(308) 233-3244

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 6. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Homes and Cremations
4115 Ave N
Kearney, NE 68847
(308) 234-3500
info@osrfh.com
<https://www.osrfh.com>

Funeral Service

APR 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

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Tribute Wall



“ Clifford E. Sovereign

January 28, 2023 at 08:01 AM



“ Heartfelt Memories was purchased for the family of Clifford E. Sovereign.



April 06, 2022 at 09:01 AM



“ Deb Kennell lit a candle in memory of Clifford E. Sovereign



Deb Kennell - April 05, 2022 at 10:10 PM

JH

“ Kenny, Susie, Kathy, Nancy, and families, our thoughts & prayers are with you all.

Uncle Cliff was a great guy, he had so much passion for teaching and so many stories to share. We were so blessed to have spent times visiting with him when in Kearney & before @ Grove Lake when they were camping. Miss them all.

So many happy memories we had as kids, watching all our folks playing cards with Grandpa & Grandma Sovereign in Grand Island. All us cousins sleeping in a row on the living room floor.

Your dad & mom loved playing Pinnocle & camping out at Grove Lake. I picture them all together again, playing Pinnocle. 💕🌸

Love & Prayers, Julie (Eley) & Jim Harbols

Julie Harbols - April 05, 2022 at 07:28 PM

DK

“ Such a loving and caring Uncle. Thank you for your service during WWII and the knowledge you passed down to our generation. Now go dance with Aunt Elaine and be at peace. Love you and you will not be forgotten.

Your niece, Debbie



Deb Kennell - April 05, 2022 at 06:52 PM

RD

“Cliff was one of the most impressive administrators I’ve ever known. He would never expect a staff member to do a task he wasn’t prepared to do himself, I remember him riding on the pep club bus (no one wanted that job), and mopping the floor after a student was ill.

He was a model of integrity, and a person who was always helpful, kind and friendly.

It was a great privilege to work with professionals like Cliff and Elaine.

Rose Mary Urban Datus

Rose Mary Datus - April 05, 2022 at 04:24 PM

TO

“Cliff helped indoctrinate me into the way the Fort Kearny conference was operating. Lyle veal and Elton teeter assisted. I learned a lot. Cliff operated good schools an like to coach. His teams were tough minded. He ended up in my neighborhood in Kearney. May his memory be eternal.

Tim Odea - April 05, 2022 at 03:38 PM



“Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant was purchased for the family of Clifford E. Sovereign.



April 05, 2022 at 01:34 PM

AW

“ *Sorry to read about Mr. Sovereign. Thinking of you all. Arvid Wiest, Beatrice*

A Wiest - April 05, 2022 at 07:59 AM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Clifford E. Sovereign.*



April 04, 2022 at 07:07 PM