



## Martha Bailey

October 28, 1928 - January 15, 2010

Martha Joan Bailey, 81, of Kearney died Friday, January 15, 2010 at her residence. Visitation will be 4-7 PM, Monday January 18 at O'Brien Straatmann Funeral Home in Kearney. Burial will be on Wednesday in Emporia, KS. Details of a gathering in Kearney to celebrate her life will be announced at a future date. Memorials are suggested to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Kearney Humane Society. On-line condolences may be submitted to [osafh.com](http://osafh.com). O'Brien Straatmann Funeral Home in Kearney is in charge of arrangements. She was born October 28, 1928 to George Ralph and Grace (Gordon) Bailey in Emporia, KS. She was a graduate of Emporia High School, received her Bachelor's and Masters Degrees from Kansas State Teachers College and a Specialist Degree from New York University. After several years teaching in high school and college in Kansas, Joan came to the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 1963 to be the assistant coach for the men's and women's swimming teams. Swimming was the only sport offered to women at that time. By 1964, she was coaching the women's team and also coordinating women's physical education. Under her leadership, the Aqua Lopers became major contenders in the NAIA and later the NCAA. Bailey was named Swim Coach of the Year by the NAIA in 1989. Over her 34 year career at UNK, she proved to be a pioneer in both the organization and funding of athletics for women at Kearney and throughout Nebraska. She was the first softball coach at UNK and often said she had coached just about every sport at one time or another. She was

inducted into the UNK Athletic Hall of Fame in 2003. Generations of children were taught to swim by Miss Bailey. She was tireless in her efforts to make sure every child regardless of ability or aptitude learned to swim. She taught lessons every summer and was always thrilled when someone she taught to swim brought their own children for her to teach. Survivors include siblings, Theresa Bailey of Indian Hills, CO, Marilyn Bailey of Alameda, CA and Alan Bailey of Palm Desert, CA, and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, sister Linda Sue Bailey and brother Hugh Robert Bailey.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Martha Bailey*

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January 28, 2023 at 08:01 AM