



Naomi Harnagel

November 11, 1924 - April 16, 2022

Naomi G. Harnagel, 97 of Ft. Collins, Colorado formerly of Kearney passed away Saturday, April 16, 2022 at Pathways Care Center in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Funeral services will be held 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, April 27, 2022 at the Kearney First United Methodist Church with Pastor Seungli You officiating. Interment will follow at Armada Cemetery in Miller, NE. Visitation will be held 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Tuesday at O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home in Kearney and one hour prior to the service at the church.

Naomi Gertrude Zalud was born November 11, 1924 to Michael J. and Emma Lena (Reinert) Zalud, their 6th child, on the family farm near Burwell, Garfield County, Nebraska. When she was four years old the family moved to a farm near Amelia, Holt County, Nebraska. While at Amelia, Naomi was baptized along sister Barbara and brother Eldon into the Methodist Church of Amelia on August 16, 1931 by Rev. A. L. Lindsey. A bad investment of Guernsey milk cows caused the loss of the farm in 1934 and the family tried to find a better living elsewhere. Naomi had begun first grade at age four at school in Amelia, so she was in the 6th grade when they left Amelia. That year she went to six different schools until they finally settled at Elm Creek, Nebraska. Her mother thought she should be in school even if only a week or two and not miss any school during their search. At this time her parents separated and her mother and children moved to Kearney when she began the 9th grade at Kearney schools. She graduated with the Class of 1941 from Longfellow High School.

The summer between the 11th and 12th grades, she applied to do a “thank you job” as a secretary at KGFW, but because they were an inter-state business they had to pay the minimum wage of 35 cents an hour.

Naomi’s step-father followed the Kearney Irishman baseball team and knew Lee Harnagel, a member of the team, and introduced him to Naomi which resulted in their marriage upon her graduation. Shortly after their marriage Lee received a Civil Service offer of employment with the Veterans Administration in Washington, D. C. After the birth of their son in 1942, Naomi was hired as secretary to the Secretary of the Board at the National Cathedral in D.C. Lee received his “greetings” from the draft and the family returned to Nebraska where he was inducted in February, 1943 and sent overseas in November until the war ended in 1945. During his service she worked at the Air Base in Kearney and then in the Stenographic Pool at Lockheed in Burbank, California until Lee returned from the CBI (China-Burma-India) area of service. After nine years of farming near Miller, Nebraska, the family moved to Pomona, California where Lee worked for the Post Office of Pomona and Naomi worked at Sears and later as secretary to the Dean of Admissions and his three assistants at Pomona College. When Lee retired in 1978, they moved back to Miller, Nebraska and built their retirement home north of Miller and Naomi began working for Ganz and Ganz Law firm in Kearney. After two years there, her back problems returned and she had to stop working. Because of Lee’s failing health, they moved to Kearney in 1999. Lee passed away December 6, 2008 and she continued to live in Kearney until it became necessary to live near her son and grandchildren in Ft. Collins, Colorado. She not only had back problems (2 back surgeries) but the onset of macular degeneration and losing her sight so she could no longer be independent. Thus the move in 2015.

Naomi became interested in genealogy about 1965 and it became her HOBBY! Her father’s parents came to the U.S. from Bohemia in the 1870’s and her mother’s parents in the 1880’s from Germany. It was very easy for her

to obtain information overseas and make contact with family members, even some behind the “Iron Curtain”. Through a stroke of luck, she made connections with her father’s relatives in Czechoslovakia and learned they have family reunions. In her letter to a member she asked when the next one would be and the answer was “when we would come they would have one”. She and Lee immediately planned a trip and went in May, 1974. Those distant relatives became so dear that first visit that she knew her calling was to return and take things to them that they could not get under the Communist government. The same was true for her German relatives in East Germany. As time went on, she made 15 trips to Europe and one to Australia, all as the result of her interest in family. Her brother Eldon and daughter accompanied her and Lee on their first trip to Czechoslovakia and Germany. Her sister, Barbara, accompanied her on several trips, and she also took granddaughters and son and wife to meet current relatives and learn of their heritage. She and Lee also hosted Harnagel reunions in their home while living in California and she and cousin Genevieve Zalud Henslee started the Zalud reunions in Porterville, California. After moving to Nebraska in 1978, a cousin of Lee’s asked him to start the Harnagel reunions in Nebraska, and in 2013 brother Herman’s grandson David Sullivan asked Naomi to begin the Zalud reunions in Nebraska and the first gathering began in 2014. Although sister Barbara was 99 at that time, she attended that gathering as well as the following years with the help of her daughter and granddaughter. Many loyal family members have kept both family reunions active ever since.

Naomi belonged to many organizations. These included First United Methodist Church of Kearney, Fort Kearny Genealogy Society, one of the founding members of the Miller Senior Citizens, life member of St. Louis Genealogy Society, South Central Nebraska Czechs of Hastings Nebraska, Buffalo Co. Historical Society, United Methodist Women of Kearney, and Eastern Star #35 of Kearney.

Survivors are her son Gary and wife Sylvia, granddaughters Christina and husband Shad Nelson and daughters Chyanna, and husband Spencer Rhoton, and Chylee, and husband Justin Lang; Kathleen and husband Michael Dexter and children Ryan, Kyle, Tyler, Kira, Alicia and Kevin; Rebecca and husband Michael McFarland and children Jaiden and Adilyn; Theresa and children Bianca and Aurora; and grandson John Harnagel and wife Alyssa and sons William, Matthew, Levi, Jarom and Ammon; nieces, nephews and cousins.

Preceding her in death are her parents, husband Alvin Lee Harnagel, grandson Richard Lee Harnagel, an infant sister and brother, brother Eldon Zalud and wife Irene, brother Herman Zalud and wife Margaret, brother Charles Zalud and wife Betty, sister Barbara Klein, sisters-in-law Evelyn Fees, Ruby Harnagel, Opal Davis and husband Hugh, brothers-in-law William H. Klein, Haisel "Chub" Harnagel and wife Arlene, and husband's parents Elmer and Ida (Ehresman) Harnagel.

Memorial donations are suggested to the perpetual care of Armada Cemetery at Miller, Nebraska, First United Methodist Church of Kearney, Nebraska, Ft. Kearny Genealogical Society of Kearney, Nebraska, South Central Nebraska Czechs Society of Hastings, Nebraska or donor's choice.

Cemetery Details

Armada Cemetery

Miller, NE

Previous Events

Visitation

APR **26**. 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 **27**. 10:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church
4500 Linden Drive
Kearney, NE 68847

Tribute Wall



“ *Naomi Harnagel*

January 28, 2023 at 08:01 AM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Naomi Harnagel.*



April 26, 2022 at 09:15 AM



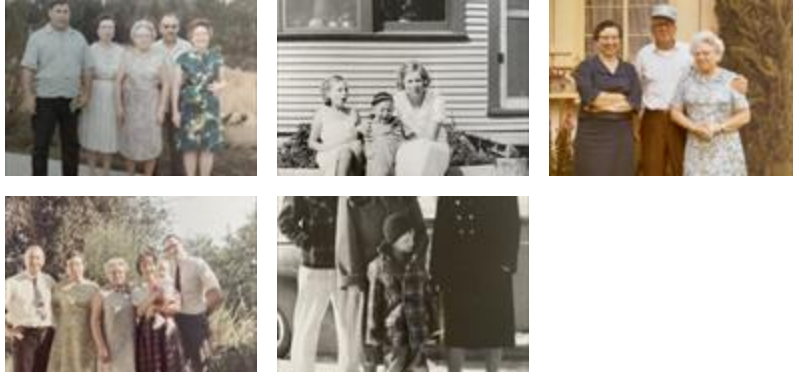
“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Naomi Harnagel.*



April 25, 2022 at 02:24 PM

NT

“ My dearest Aunt, you will be terribly missed. So many great memories I will post some photos of your life. Some with your husband, Lee. Others with siblings, your mother, Emma and Son Gary and wife Sylvia. The world will not be the same without you. So proud of your strength and wisdoms. Love your niece Nadine Zalud Thomas and family from Granada Hills, California.



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 25, 2022 at 01:59 PM

GI

“ Gary & Jo Ibsen lit a candle in memory of Naomi Harnagel



Gary & Jo Ibsen - April 23, 2022 at 05:06 PM

NT

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 21, 2022 at 07:01 PM

NT

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 21, 2022 at 06:57 PM

NT

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 21, 2022 at 06:56 PM

NT

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 21, 2022 at 06:54 PM

NT

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 21, 2022 at 06:51 PM

NT

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 21, 2022 at 06:49 PM

NT

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 21, 2022 at 06:48 PM

NT

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Nadine Zalud Thomas - April 21, 2022 at 06:43 PM