



Verle F. Straatmann

July 21, 1930 - July 15, 2018

Verle Straatmann, 87
Kearney resident

Verle Francis Straatmann, 87, of Kearney passed away, Sunday July 15, 2018, at Nebraska Medicine in Omaha. A memorial service will be 10:30 AM, Saturday at O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home in Kearney. The Rev. John Gosswein will officiate. Military rites at the funeral home will be conducted by the Marine Corps Honor Guard in cooperation with the VFW Post 759 and the American Legion post 52 of Kearney. A private interment will be held at a later date. Memorials are suggested to the family for future designation. Online condolences may be shared at osrfh.com O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home in Kearney is in charge of arrangements. Born in Wilcox, NE on July 21, 1930 to Fokko and Antje (Garrelts) Straatmann, he was the youngest of 7 siblings. He spent his early life on a farm near Hildreth and in 1937 moved to Kearney and attended Zion Lutheran School, Kearney Junior High and a 1948 graduate of Kearney High School. In 1952 he obtained his bachelor's degree from Kearney State Teachers College, majoring in chemistry and physics with a minor in music. In 1952 he was drafted into the Marine Corps and stationed in Korea as a radar specialist. There he entertained the troops with a radio program that played throughout the mess and officers halls. Verle excelled while in the military, obtaining a rifle accuracy record that still stands today, and was

awarded numerous medals including the Korean Service Medal with 2 Service Stars, the United Nations Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

In 1954 he began his award-winning teaching career in Hildreth, Nebraska, and married the love of his life, Janet “Janie” Johnson on July 29, 1956 in Hildreth. They then moved to Holdrege, at which time he obtained his master’s degree in public administration. His years at Holdrege were very successful. The HHS marching band competed biannually with bands from both the U.S. and abroad, always achieving first place. During the off years, Verle adjudicated many marching, symphonic and solo competitions. For this he was awarded numerous recognitions from Governors and U.S. Senators as well as Presidents. His most prized awards were being inducted as an admiral into the Nebraska Navy, and obtaining the Gary Thomas Distinguished Alumni Award. He always gave the credit of any of his success to his students, all of whom he dearly loved.

In 1976, Verle and his wife purchased the Bahr-Schaal music store in Kearney Nebraska.

Throughout his life he played with various professional groups including the Tommy Morgan Band, The Herb Foreman Group, The 4 Keys and the Wes and Verle Duo.

He enjoyed fishing, anything to do with technology, building his own electronics, tuning pianos, spending time with his family, traveling, and a good cigar. He did not enjoy golf- but won The Great Duffer award anyway.

His past memberships include the Kearney Elk’s Club, the Kearney Rotary, the American Legion and the VFW, and many others. He was also active in the Nebraska State Teachers Association.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Janet Marfaye Straatmann, his three daughters Julia Holden and her husband John, Cheryl Samples and her husband Ron, and Mardi Pallas and her husband Randy, as well as his grandchildren Jordan Sorenson and her husband Eric, Brianna Sears and her husband Jon, Seth, Chase, Trey, and Kyler Samples, Trevor and Skylar

Holden, and his great grandchildren Nickelle and Grayson Sorenson as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, 3 brothers and 3 sisters.

He will be so missed by his wife and family.

A lunch reception in celebration of Verle's life will be held after the morning service on what would have been his 88th birthday, at the American Legion in Kearney.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUL **21**. 10:30 AM (CT)

O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Homes and Cremations

4115 Ave N

Kearney, NE 68847

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<https://www.osrfh.com>

Tribute Wall



“ Verle F. Straatmann

January 28, 2023 at 08:01 AM



“ I took music theory with Mr. Straatmann, did recording of one of my early bands and watched several of his performances with the 4 Keys. He inspired what has become a lifetime of music for me. His influence on my life has truly been profound.



Marvin Withers - August 17, 2018 at 05:30 PM



“ Mr. Straatmann not only taught us music, but also commitment, follow-through, and meeting goals. Excellence was part of his nature, which became part of the music we played. The Calgary Stampede trip and playing the theme song to Star Wars (right after the original movie) are 2 of my favorite memories. Thoughts and prayers to the family.
Jean (Davis) Yockey

Jean (Davis) Yockey - July 20, 2018 at 09:01 PM

SM

“ I was sad to hear of Verle's death, but what joy he was to so many that were lucky enough to share his light. Cast your mind back to when Verle taught in Hildreth. I was in the Holdrege High Band and a few of us made a trip to Hildreth to hear a "Hi-Fi" system that he had built in the school gym. That small little thing set off a spark in my head that led me to build sound systems and set me on a course in the professional music industry that has taken me around the world as a sound designer and audio engineer. Over the years I often kept in touch with Verle to share audio doings. I am now 78 this fall and retired. In 2017 I completed the 50-Anniversary World Concert Tour with Neil Diamond. Who would have thought that Verle's inspiration and mentoring would have been so provocative in my life? I can only imagine the number of positive lives he touched. May the surviving family and friends take great joy in remembering how he touched so many. RIP my friend.

Stanley R. Miller, Big Bear, CA

Stanley R. Miller - July 20, 2018 at 05:41 PM

MA

“ I am so grateful that Verle was the Holdrege band instructor when our three boys were in school. They all received wonderful music education. When he came one evening and asked if we would be willing to be sponsors on the band trip to Spokane, we accepted the responsibility with joy. Verle always had everything planned so well and the band did extremely well. We got to go to Calgary, Canada with our next son two years later. What great memories. He will be missed as he shared his music and knowledge with many. So, I say Thanks, Verle and to the family my thoughts and prayers are with you. Mary Anna Anderson

Mary Anna Anderson - July 20, 2018 at 05:21 PM

RK

“ Verle was a part of my family all my life. When I was a child my father would gig with Verle a lot. When I became a musician myself I was fortunate enough to play similar gigs with Verle. I will always remember his kind smile as he looked over from behind his keys to give pointers, teach a lesson or tell a joke. I can hear him singing "Show Me the Way to Go Home" at the end of the gig. All of my love to the Straatman family.

Robb Krysl - July 20, 2018 at 10:14 AM

NH

“ Mr. Straatman was truly "One if a kind". He challenged you but also supported you as you strove to fulfill the expectations. I recall practicing many hours to reach goals. His musical expertise was unbelievable. He will truly be missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Nancy Harms and Gerhart Wehrbein

Nancy Harms - July 19, 2018 at 10:29 PM

RC

“ Verle was an incredible teacher and friend. He was one of the first adults to validate my opinions as a young man. I was watching CBS' Sunday Morning this past week and saw a story about an unforgettable music teacher. I looked at my wife and said that was Verle in my life (I understood later that he was in Omaha at that moment).

I just got back from Oregon. I'll never forget our trip to Portland where we won first prize at the Rose Festival! Thanks Mr. Straatmann for EVERYTHING!

Rich Carlson

Rich Carlson - July 19, 2018 at 06:07 PM

RN

“ Dear Straatmann Family,

Jeanne and I were so sad to hear about Verle's death. Besides my dad he was one of the most significant mentors and teacher that I had. Verle was a disciplined and skilled technician who always got the most out of his students. During the time that I student taught with Verle I learned more during those 9 weeks than I did my entire 4 years of college. When I followed Verle as the band director in Holdrege I told people that I knew how Tom Osborne felt following Bob Devaney. Verle will be missed by all of us. Thank you Straatmann family for sharing your husband, dad, and granddad with us! He was a very special man!

*Sincerely,
Randy and Jeanne Nelson*

Randy Nelson - July 19, 2018 at 12:08 PM

BD

“ *My sympathy to the Straatmann family. The genius of this great man's teaching career was only exceeded by his day to day energy and commitment to giving his best for the fortunate music students he developed. He is the finest teacher I have had in my lifetime and his legacy will continue to benefit our world through those students who learned much more than musical skill and interpretation from him.*

Thank you Mr. Straatmann for sharing so much with us!

Bud Dahlstrom

Bud Dahlstrom - July 19, 2018 at 08:10 AM

RG

“ Verle and Wes Hird (I believe) played at dances in Hastings several years back when I visited last. His music and attitude were always an inspiration. Prayers go out to the family and friends of which he had many.

Ron Gewecke - July 18, 2018 at 10:44 PM

CS

“ Our deepest sympathies for your loss. Thoughts and prayers to all.

Carl & Angie(Shultz) Schroer - July 18, 2018 at 08:08 PM

DC

“ Thanks for all of the music, Verle, and for the kind and insightful words along the way.

Dirk Christensen - July 18, 2018 at 08:36 AM

BT

“ I am so honored to have been in the Holdrege High School band under Mr. Staatmann's direction. We got discipline from him and he had our full respect. He was a wonderful teacher and person and will be missed by many of us.

Burton Thompson - July 17, 2018 at 08:23 PM

SN

“ Mr. Staatmann was the gold standard of teachers. He instilled so many values in his students and our respect for him was immense. I have so many great memories of my time in the Holdrege High School band under his direction. My prayers and thoughts are with his family.

Susie (Barker) Nation

Susie Nation - July 17, 2018 at 11:33 AM

RB

“ Verle was a wonderful man and musician , , he and Wes were such good mentors to my son Jim Gustafson , , God comfort you all

Ruth Barnes - July 17, 2018 at 09:57 AM

KS

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Verle shared so much music with all of us and was a special mentor to Raymond who student taught for him in 1973 in Holdrege. I pray that Verle and Raymond are sharing heavenly music today.

Karen Scott

Karen Scott - July 16, 2018 at 08:10 PM