



Donald Wayne Rogert

May 16, 1927 - November 24, 2019

Donald W. Rogert 5/16/1927 – 11/24/2019

Beloved husband of the late Lois Rogert, father of the late Rodney Rogert, son of the late Polly (Rudy) Rogert and Alec Kerns. Don is survived by his children: Mike (Carol) Rogert; Lori (Mike) Dyas, and Lisa (Greg) Kibbie; his grandchildren: Sandy Wlacshin (Allan), Dan Rogert (Nichole), Susan Rogert, Shane Rogert (Anna), Casey Rogert (Bre), Mick Dyas (Brooke), Melissa Johnson, Travis Johnson (Julie), Kyle Johnson (Regina) and Carlee Lockner (Justin); his great grandchildren; his sisters Mary Cabela, Rita Burnett, Virginia Helms and his brother Jim Kerns; nieces and nephews, and his many, many friends.

Don loved to tell stories of his past and his family's history. To honor Don and the wonderful life he lived, the family would like to share some of our favorite stories that form some of the many reasons we loved him.

The Birth of a Legend

Don's grandfather and grandmother, Ira and Sara Isabel Reddinton, were homesteaders in Oklahoma in the early days. Family lore has it that Ira was a keen hunter and the hunting in Oklahoma wasn't very good, so he uprooted Sara Isabel and joined a wagon train headed north east. That hearty group of pioneers were led to Nebraska by none other than Buffalo Bill Cody. Ira and Sara Isabel settled in Mullen, Nebraska. After Ira's death, Grandma Isabel, as she was known to all, stayed in Mullen with her daughter Polly. Isabel loved to tell a story of life in those days. She said that she'd bake bread, most often 5 loaves. Men from the local Indian tribe would enter her house and take all but one loaf. All done in silence. Later on in the day, they'd hear a whump on the door. They'd open it up and find a deer lying there, left by the Indians as payment for the bread. She said that they never had any issues with the tribe. Always traded and respected each other. One day, she saw them head out and later found that they'd traveled to Little Big Horn.

Polly met and married a handsome young cowboy, Alec Kerns. From their union, we were blessed with Don. Sadly, Alec wasn't the staying kind and early on in Don's life, Alec disappeared and they divorced. Polly was a school teacher and raised Don on her own. Polly had her hands full with him. Don believed in running the town of Mullen naked as a little boy. Her toughest task then was keeping him in clothes. Polly and Don moved east towards Omaha and she married her beau, Rudy Rogert. Rudy adopted Don and raised

him as his son and so he became Don Rogert. During the height of the depression, Rudy, Polly and young Don were homeless and they lived by the famed grain bins off the interstate. There are so many stories about that time. One that sticks out is Don had a pet chicken. One day he couldn't find his chicken, but oh did they have a nice meal that night. Once they moved to Benson, Don made many friends, Bobby Miles being his closest. They were typical boys getting into typical boy trouble. Don would tell about the time Polly left a note for him after school "Don't go to Bobby's" When she got home she found a note that said "Gone to Bobby's" written on the same piece of paper. When she would go to punish him with a leather belt they kept handy, he would hide under the bed and hold onto the spring so when she moved the bed, he went with it. We all understand the "burdens" Polly had while raising a head strong Don.

The Early Years

Don's mother Polly, as we noted earlier, was a school teacher. Much to her chagrin, Don wasn't much for school. Not that he wasn't a smart fellow, just lacked interest in formal education. Don dropped out after the 9th grade. He claimed it was because the principal said "this school isn't big enough for both of us". Around this time, he met Lois Shaver, a lovely lady a year his senior. At just 17, Don and Lois snuck over to Council Bluffs to get married. He joked that he packed up his jacks and model airplanes and got married. Don adored his lovely Lois. He used to send her flowers regularly and without fail. He often said that Lois was his perfect partner. She took care of the house and children and he didn't question that. He worked and did business and she didn't question that either. He said that she told him as long as he provided a home for the family, food on the table and it was legal, she didn't care what he chose to do.

Soon after Don and Lois married, World War II came calling. Don went into the Army and was stationed in the Philippines. Don told a story about being stationed there. He was in charge of a group of Japanese POW's. Now Don had won, in a poker game with a group of officers, a 1942 Harley 45. Looking for something for the POW's to do, Don set them about the task of painting his Harley. The problem was, he only had canary yellow paint, so he wound up with a canary yellow Harley. For those who know Don, in later years, he bought an identical '42 Harley 45. When his good friend CL Werner had it restored as a gift to Don, it's painted that same canary yellow. That Harley is a Rogert family treasure, currently entrusted to Mike, it will go to the next generation and so on and so on.

Don returned to the states and his beloved Lois and the children came. First Rod, who looked so much like his dad. Next came Mike, who favored Lois. Then came Lori, favoring dad as well. Finally, Lisa who, like Mike, favored Lois. During this time, Don and Lois moved from Avery to Hansen's Lake, LaPlatte and finally to Valley, Nebraska. Don held a variety of jobs, becoming a mechanic for the man who would become his mentor, HP Smith. He told the story that he was offered a job by a rival dealership as a salesman. So he went into HP's office to quit, telling him that he had received an offer to be a salesman.

HP told him Don, get a suit and show up tomorrow, you're being promoted to salesman. And so he stayed.

The Golden Years

In 1964, Don had the opportunity to buy a sand and gravel business. He said that, at the time, he had 600 dollars in the bank. He went to HP, still his boss, and asked him what he thought. HP encouraged Don to go for it. Don then became the owner of Hartford Sand and Gravel. At the time, everyone in that business was using drag lines. Don had seen and become convinced that conveyor belts were the way to go, so he installed one and found that it moved product much faster and much more efficiently. Business started booming. HP stopped by one day to see how his protégé was doing. Don explained to him that he had more business than he could handle. The problem he was having is that he just didn't have enough trucks. HP took the phone and called his dealership. He told the salesman to get all the gravel trucks they had in inventory ready and get them out to Don. Don told HP that there was no way he had enough money to pay for them. HP just said you will and left it at that. Hartford went on to be the largest sand and gravel company in Nebraska. Don designed many pieces of equipment that are used to this day in the sand and gravel business. Don eventually sold Hartford to Lyman Richie. As a part of that sale, he had a 5 year non-compete clause. At the end of that 5 years, Don opened and ran Mallard Sand and Gravel on a farm he owned south of Valley. He, in the end, sold that business to Old Castle, but they retained his consulting services until his passing. At the same time as he bought Hartford, Don moved the family again. There was a ramshackle old farmhouse on the same property as the gravel pit. Much to Lois' dismay, he moved the family into it. There were cows at the window to scare Lois and the boys woke the first morning to a snow drift between their beds, but he promised her that within a year, he'd build her a fine home. Good to his word, within a year they moved into the first "big house", bought and paid for by that gravel business.

Ever the efficient one, Don decided that commercial flying was not for him. Too restrictive. So he went to Eppley airfield and took lessons and so became his own pilot. He built an airstrip right by his house in Valley. He had many planes over the years and fond memories of them all. His son Mike caught the flying bug and became a pilot as well. He was copilot to Don's pilot, Bob Harvey, and flew Don, Lois or whomever they asked all over the country.

Don loved to fish and hunt. His children and grandchildren have many fond memories of fishing at his camp up in Canada. Don loved participating in all manner of hunting and shooting competitions. He's won the "Nebraska One Box" hunt and Grand National Quail hunt in Enid, Oklahoma.

They had, by all accounts, a wonderful life. His children all love the outdoors still. He indulged all his children with ponies, motorbikes, boats and such. There is a story of one

particular pony that kept getting loose. It was a typical Nebraska thunderstorming night. That blasted pony got loose again. Don went out in the storm to get it. It kicked Don. He kicked it back. When he couldn't get it back in the fence, he reached down, picked it up and threw it over the fence.

Don and Lois enjoyed the bounty of their labor. Don, ever the adrenaline junky, raced cars at the local track. His favorite car being a 1940 Ford coupe, the Donald Duck. That fun stopped when Lois pronounced that it was too frightening and he stopped. He then picked up the guitar and taught himself to play. He formed a band, The Desperados, who performed all over the Midwest. They opened for acts such as Sawyer Brown and England Dan and John Ford Coley. Don told wonderful stories of the people he met. He was talking one day about a "nice young man" that they'd flown somewhere. That "nice young man" was Randy Travis. Don rubbed elbows with celebrities, politicians and captains of industry. He considered them all friends.

Don decided in the mid-70's that it had been enough years since he and his bio father Alec had seen each other. Don traveled to Valentine NE and talked to Alec's family and they directed him to an apartment over a bar in Billings, MT. Don bought Alec his then-wife May a house in Billings and re-established their relationship. When May died, he moved Alec into a retirement home in Red Lodge MT. Apparently, Alec wasn't meant for that life. Don soon moved Alec back to Valley, installing him in the cabin on the family property. Don took care of Alec for the rest of his life. Alec got the opportunity to get re-acquainted with his son, his grandkids and even his great grandkids. Don just did the next right thing.

The Later Years

Don and Lois had many epic adventures. There is one solid fact: If you were a male Rogert and you needed a job, Dad had a job for you. He wouldn't hesitate to fire you, but you always had a job. Don loved the art of the deal. You could always count on him have a deal or 3 on the table at any given time. His generosity was legendary in the Valley area. One could always count on Don to help out without notice or fanfare, not seeking personal recognition, but simply to do the right thing. Don served on the board of directors of up to 7 different companies in the greater Omaha area. His advice was sought regularly by different companies seeking to access that encyclopedic knowledge of the sand and gravel industry. Once, when entertaining some senior managers from another company, the men left the meeting looking at each other saying – did you get the idea that we weren't the smartest person in the room? Don lived for those days.

Don's life was not without sadness. His oldest son Rod passed away in 1992 at age 43. His mom Polly died in 1999 at age 94 and he lost his beloved Lois in 2012 at age 86. Don kept all of these people in his heart and cherished their memories.

In his later life, Don relished being surrounded by family. Whether it was his kids, his grandkids, his great grandkids, or any of his friends, there were few days that Don didn't

have company. He loved it all. Offering advice, telling stories and jokes, or just listening, he was the rock that people leaned on. He looked forward to his bi-weekly poker games, even though the players had changed as the originals passed away. His life was vital, important and valued until the day he died.

So, friends and family, raise a glass of your favorite libation and toast our father, our grandpa, our friend Don Rogert. We love him, we miss him and we're certain that heaven is a much more interesting place with him there.

Events

DEC **Visitation** 12:00PM - 07:00PM

1

Reichmuth Funeral Home-Elkhorn
21901 W. Maple Rd. , Elkhorn, NE, US, 68022

DEC **Family will receive friends** 03:00PM - 07:00PM

1

Reichmuth Funeral Home - Omaha / Elkhorn
21901 W. Maple Rd P.O. Box 67, Elkhorn, NE, US, 68022

DEC **Masonic** 07:00PM

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Reichmuth Funeral Home-Elkhorn
21901 W. Maple Rd. , Elkhorn, NE, US, 68022

DEC **Service** 11:00AM

2

Bethany Lutheran Church
4200 N 204th Street, Elkhorn, NE, US, 68022

Comments



“ I had the pleasure of meeting Don and Lois in 1979 when I traveled to Nebraska from Manitoba as one of their guests during a Boy Scout Jamboree. We had stayed in contacted since. When my annual Christmas call was not able to get through I then became aware of his passing. Don was a real gentleman and he will be missed. My deepest condolences goes out to the Rogert family.
Inspector Graham Geddes, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (retired), Truro Nova Scotia

Graham Geddes - December 27, 2019 at 11:35 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



December 01, 2019 at 12:49 PM



“ Tom & Lori Slobodnik purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



Tom & Lori Slobodnik - November 30, 2019 at 03:31 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



November 30, 2019 at 02:21 PM



“ I would like to say to the family how sorry I am for your lose. I would also like to share a few memories that may help celebrate Mr. Rogert and his impact on my life as a young man. My memories of the Rogert family and Hartford Sand and Gravel family are very special. As a young boy I took note of how Don would treat his drivers and how he had earned their respect by being honest and truthful with them. I remember each and every time Don would see me with my dad he always took time to speak to me. The memories of the company picnics will always be held dear to me. It was truly a family event and we looked forward to going every year. One of the fondest memories I have was getting the Christmas box each year with my Dad. It was huge in my eyes and hand wrapped. It was filled with all the things that made Christmas special. Plus a turkey. When I got older I understood how much my parents appreciated the gift as well. It made it a little easier on them at that time of year. I learned from my mother and father to have a strong work ethic. Don reinforced that if you have a strong work ethic it will pay great dividends. I'm not sure if he ever realized that he was a roll model I regret never telling him so personally. Don was never above his employees he was one of them. When my own father passed I asked Don if he would be an honorary pallbearer and he graciously accepted. I will never forget Don and the positive impact he has had on my life. Charlie Sake.

Charlie Sake - November 29, 2019 at 02:03 PM



“ Such kind words Charlie, I remember those company picnics and Christmas boxes. Thank you for posting.

Lisa - November 30, 2019 at 04:21 PM



“ SWAIN CONSTRUCTION purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



SWAIN CONSTRUCTION - November 29, 2019 at 11:59 AM



“ My husband, Chuck Charter, and I want to send our sympathy to Don's family. He was a good man. Chuck was a Nebraska trooper and would go up to Canada to help with Don's camp and always enjoyed that. He will be remembered warmly by many. May God comfort you in your loss.

Sincerely,
Chuck and Verna Charter

Verna Charter - November 28, 2019 at 11:08 PM



“ Our sincere condolences to the entire family on the loss of a very good man, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. We will miss him.

John and Shelley Humpal

John Humpal - November 28, 2019 at 02:10 PM



“ Don was a great person and fun to be with. I enjoyed his accomplishments and participation in the Grand National Quail Hunt. My deepest sympathy to his wonderful family, I know how much he meant to Dan, Travis and Kyle. He will be missed!

charles gause - November 27, 2019 at 12:17 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



November 27, 2019 at 09:45 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



November 26, 2019 at 04:14 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



November 25, 2019 at 11:50 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



November 25, 2019 at 08:18 PM



“ So many childhood memories with the Rogert family. Don was always so kind to us.

Robin Jorgensen Olson - November 25, 2019 at 08:02 PM



“ What wonderful memories our parents gave us all!

Lori Dyas - November 26, 2019 at 08:37 AM



“ Many fun times with your family. Thank you Robin!

Lisa - November 26, 2019 at 11:05 AM



“ The Rogert home was my home away from home. I spent many weekends there always up to some kind mischief with Lori and Lisa. Many many fond memories! I had ran into Don and Lois at the bank in Valley years ago. I stopped and talked to them, before I left he looked at me and said you look the same just different hair, ruffed my hair up and gave me a big hug. He was a special man.

Lori Jorgensen Huyck - December 01, 2019 at 10:05 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Donald Wayne Rogert.



November 25, 2019 at 04:56 PM