

Dr. Paul Jay Gardner Ph.D.

May 25, 1929 - April 22, 2025

Paul was born in Wichita, KS, on May 25, 1929, to Walter Elias and Ethel Dolly (Rogers) Gardner. He graduated from Wichita North High School and then attended Wichita State for his undergraduate degree. Paul received his master's degree from the University of Wichita in 1955.

On October 28, 1949, Paul married Garnet Ann Wannow in Wichita, KS, and they raised four sons together. From 1954-1955, Paul worked as a teaching assistant for Wichita State, and from 1955-1956 he worked as a teaching assistant for Kansas University. Paul and his family resided in Wichita until 1956, when Paul began his career as a professor and department head of biology in Vincennes, IN. In 1960, they moved to Omaha, NE, and Paul worked as an assistant professor of biology at UNO through 1963.

In 1964, Paul first became a member of the University of Nebraska Medical Center faculty. Paul became assistant professor at UNMC in 1965, associate professor in 1970, and then professor and vice chairman of the department of anatomy in 1977. Paul was a talented teacher, researcher, and administrator for UNMC. He went on a 13-month sabbatical with the National Institute of Health in 1983-1984. During this time, he worked as a health scientist administrator for the grant review branch of the National Cancer Institute. In 1986, Paul was named UNMC's assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs and, in addition, associate dean for graduate studies and research in 1992.

His retirement became effective in 1996, but he continued to work as a professor emeritus, choosing to teach part-time during fall semesters until 2006. Paul loved to teach, and during his time at UNMC, Paul supervised nine Ph.D. students, three of whom went on to become well-known for their research on the male reproductive system.

Although Paul had an incredibly successful career that he dedicated a lot of his time to, Paul cited his family as his greatest accomplishment. He will be remembered for his dedication, thoughtfulness, compassion, and quiet sense of humor. In his free time, Paul liked to cheer for the Nebraska Huskers, Kansas Jayhawks, and the Wichita State Shockers. He also enjoyed fishing and gardening.

Paul was preceded in death by his parents, Walter and Ethel Gardner; his half-sister, Clothilde Fairchild, and his infant twin sons. He is survived by his wife of 75 years, Garnet Gardner; children: Walter (Sue) Gardner, Paul Gardner Jr. (Mary Novak), Michael (Sandy) Gardner, and Richard (Jeanette) Gardner; 11 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.

VISITATION: 10:30-11 a.m., on Friday, April 25, 2025 with FUNERAL SERVICE beginning at 11 a.m., at Reichmuth Funeral Home in Yutan, NE. INTERMENT to follow at Hollst Lawn Cemetery.

Memorials may be directed to the Alzheimer's Association.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR **25**. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Reichmuth Funeral Home - Yutan
4th and Vine Street
Yutan, NE 68073

Funeral Service

APR **25**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Reichmuth Funeral Home - Yutan
4th and Vine Street
Yutan, NE 68073

Tribute Wall



“ *Reichmuth Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Dr. Paul Jay Gardner Ph.D.*



Reichmuth Funeral Home - April 29, 2025 at 04:54 PM



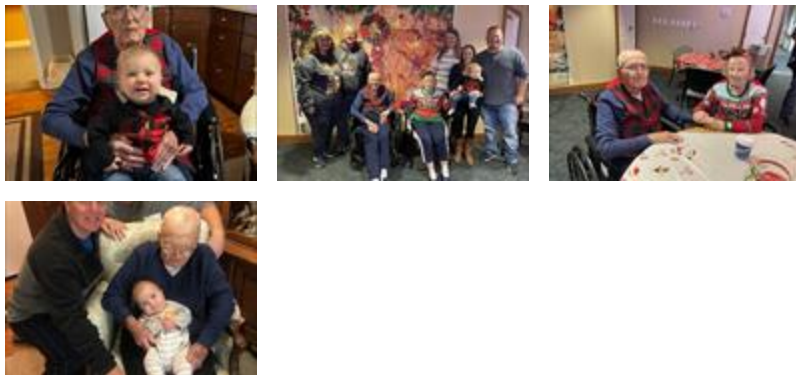
“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Tara Gardner-Lokey - April 25, 2025 at 12:44 PM



“ *4 files added to the tribute wall*



Taylor Gardner - April 24, 2025 at 05:26 PM

“ I am one of Dr. Paul Gardner’s 11 grandchildren...but I hold the esteemed title of THE FIRST. The original. The grandkid that set the bar. Grandpa never let me forget my VIP status. One of his favorite stories – that he would tell with great pride – was how he was in the operating room when I was born...not as the doctor, mind you, just there for the viewing. He'd grin and say, “I was one of the first people to see your little pink bum.” This was a fact he repeated so often, it made its way into his retirement speech. Yes, Grandpa retired from a distinguished medical career by talking about his first grandkid’s butt.

Growing up, I knew Grandpa was smart—like “taught and mentored countless doctors and other medical professionals” smart. But to me, he was just Grandpa. The guy who could sit down at a piano and make music come alive without ever reading a note. He could just hear a tune once and boom, full concert performance – totally by ear. When I started learning the piano as a kid, he’d play alongside me, and sometimes he’d play while I sang or my cousins played violin.

Throughout my childhood, the family would spend summers at a little fishing resort in Minnesota, complete with rustic cabins and not enough water pressure to rinse the shampoo out of your hair kind of charm. Grandpa and I would go out fishing for hours. One summer, he brought along a fancy new fish finder. The thing worked so well, I caught around 20 sunfish, most without bait...just had a bobber, shiny hook, and a fish fry dream. That same trip, I also learned what happens when you think the sun won’t find you on a cloudy day while out on the lake – a lovely second-degree sunburn on the tops of your thighs and backs of your calves. I was full on lobster kid.

But while the rest of the family was outside enjoying a cookout that evening, complete with homemade ice cream and fun games with the cousins, Grandpa stayed in that little daddy long legs infested, AC-less cabin with me while I was laid out on the sofa sick from the painful burning and the heat of the summer. He dragged every box

fan to my side and continually sprayed my legs with aloe vera like he was putting out a fire.

He was proud of all his grandkids, but let's be real...he REALLY wanted one of us to go into medicine. When I was in high school, trying to figure out my future, he'd probe my medical interest with questions like: "What if I put a microscope in front of you with a slide of cells?" or "How about slicing into a cadaver? Would that be fun?" And I, with all the poise of a toddler, responded with: "Ewwww, NO!"

Grandpa may not have found a doctor-in-training in me, but he got a grandkid who bonded with him over music and fishing, who will forever cherish his memory, and who will always be proud to say: "I was his first little pink grandbun."

- By Tara Gardner-Lokey, daughter of Michael and Sandy Gardner



Tara Lokey - April 24, 2025 at 05:18 PM

AS

“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Alex Seewald - April 24, 2025 at 01:29 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Dr. Paul Jay Gardner Ph.D..



April 23, 2025 at 09:36 PM