



## Elaine M. Patras

April 11, 1932 - January 1, 2026

Elaine Mildred (Schnuelle) Patras was born on April 11, 1932, to Oscar and Ida (Engelman) Schnuelle on the family farm near Harbine, NE. She was one of 7 children and loved her family with adoration and deep loyalty. Elaine was baptized and confirmed at the Hope Evangelical and Reformed Church near Harbine. She attended a country school, and with only 1 son in the family, she was expected to help with milking (cleaning the separator was not necessarily her favorite chore), and she drove a tractor with finesse. At Diller high school, she participated in drama, volleyball (she was a strong underhand server), and played trombone in the band. Upon graduation in 1949, she taught for 3 years in a country school.

Elaine met John Patras as a high school freshman. They soon became high school sweethearts and were featured in a precious heart-shaped photo in their yearbook. After dating 5 years, they married June 1, 1952. A month before he passed away in 2022, John and Elaine celebrated their 70th Wedding Anniversary, a rare and meaningful milestone.

John and Elaine's first home was on a farm near Diller. Within a year, John was drafted into the army. He left for the Korean War just 8 days after Patricia Elaine was born and served for 2 years. During this time, Elaine lived with her parents, worked as a nurse's aide, and also taught in a country school. When John returned, he farmed in Diller for 3 years, and then they moved to

Columbus, NE to run a dairy farm for 7 years. They were both very active at St. Luke's United Church of Christ in Columbus.

Thinking of their future, they relocated to Norfolk, NE and both attended Norfolk Junior College. Elaine graduated with an Associate Degree in 1965. Steven John was born in 1966, the same month that John graduated with his Associate Degree. Soon, they moved to Peru, NE where John finished his Bachelor's degree. The family moved to Auburn, NE where John taught at the high school, and Elaine taught in a country school while continuing her college education. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Peru State in 1971 and later, with great pride and dedication, attained her Master of Education Degree from the University of Nebraska. Before retiring in 1994, Elaine taught school a total of 32 years, 23 of them at Johnson-Brock elementary school. Elaine loved teaching and thoroughly enjoyed the friendships she made with her fellow teachers, getting to know the families in the Johnson-Brock school district, and cherished all the hugs she received from the hundreds of elementary students she positively impacted.

After retirement, John and Elaine moved to Omaha. Leaving their many friends in Auburn was hard, but being the #1 super fans, periodic taxi drivers, and "we're available anytime" babysitters to their three busy grandchildren was top priority. Elaine even got to play school teacher again, when she could get the grandchildren ("Lauren, where are Jace and Jennae?") to sit down long enough to do a math problem. Good thing she kept 30 boxes full of school supplies and worksheets after she retired. Grandma was always prepared and ready! Traveling to Hawaii and Disney World in retirement were 2 special family vacations that provided years of happy memories.

Through the years, Elaine was a servant at church, teaching Sunday School and Bible school, and supporting Women's Fellowship. At Bethany Lutheran in Elkhorn, she actively served on the hospitality team, ushering and serving

communion. She was Treasurer of Hope Circle for many years, enjoyed socializing with the “grandparents day out club,” and generously provided her delicious salads and coveted chocolate chip cookies (hint: pudding mix is the secret ingredient) for luncheons.

Left to treasure Elaine’s memory are her daughter Patricia Cummings of Elkhorn, son Steven Patras and wife Gretchen of Elkhorn, grandchildren: Lauren Patras (and fiancé David McCoy) of Evanston, IL, Jace Patras of Scottsdale, AZ, and Jennae (and husband AJ) Staudt of Des Moines, IA; sisters: Joyce Neumann of DeWitt, NE and Janet Lawrence of Waxahachie, TX; many nephews, nieces, and friends.

Elaine was preceded in death by her husband John; parents; infant brother; brother Richard (Jean) Schnuelle; sisters: Arlene (Willard) Nippert, Verneal (Charlie) Barber; brothers-in-laws: Herman Neumann, Conrad Lawrence, Lester (Ruth) Patras, Ray (Marge) Patras; sister-in-laws: Hope Nippert, Imo (Merrill) Mann, Janet (Bill) Van Slyke, and Evelyn (James) Wildauer.

A celebration of life service will be held Friday, January 16 at 11:00 a.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church in Elkhorn, NE (4200 N 204th Street). A family visitation will begin at 10 a.m. and a luncheon will follow. You can view a broadcast of the service at: [reichmuthfuneralhomes.com](http://reichmuthfuneralhomes.com). A private family burial will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes memorials, to be designated later as an honorable tribute to Elaine’s life.

# Cemetery Details

## Prairie Home Cemetery

Diller, NE

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 16. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

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

## Celebration of Life Service

JAN 16. 11:00 AM (CT)

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

# Tribute Wall



“ *Reichmuth Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Elaine M. Patras*



---

**Reichmuth Funeral Home** - January 14 at 12:38 PM



“ *Reichmuth Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Elaine M. Patras*



---

**Reichmuth Funeral Home** - January 13 at 09:28 AM

KS

“ *Doug and I always enjoyed visiting with Aunt Elaine. She was a very sweet lady and always had some interesting stories about her teaching days. She will be missed by many 🙏❤️*

---

**Kathy Schnuelle** - January 16 at 11:11 PM

JC

“ Such a beautiful tribute video! Pat, Steven, Gretchen, and all, our heartfelt condolences as you send your Mom/Grandma on ahead with love tomorrow. We loved seeing all the photos, including the ones where you all looked like I remember you :) The classic and iconic photo, however, is the one of John & Elaine on the bleachers at a basketball game, epitomizing untold hours of pine time! May her soul rest in perpetual light, and may all the family rejoice in her reunion with her beloved John! Blessings & peace, John & Debi Crotty

---

**John & Debi Crotty** - January 15 at 01:33 PM

MF

“ Mike & Chris Tomjack and family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Elaine M. Patras.



---

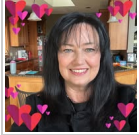
**Mike & Chris Tomjack and family** - January 12 at 10:30 AM

SP

“ So very sorry for your loss! Mrs.Patras was my 5th grade teacher at Johnson-Brock. She was one of my favorite teachers! Her smile would light up the room! She was so kind! You could tell she loved teaching and she loved children!!!!

---

**Susan Piper** - January 08 at 09:24 PM



“ I am so sorry for your loss. Mrs. Patras was my fifth grade teacher at Johnson-Brock and was one of my favorites. She made everyone feel important and special. I will forever remember her warmth and sweet smile. May God hold you close as you go through this difficult time. Lori Alexander Bellar

Lori Bellar - January 08 at 08:40 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Elaine M. Patras.



January 07 at 12:09 PM



“ My deepest sympathy to Steve, Gretchen, Patricia and families. My thoughts are with you in this time of sorrow.

Jenice Bates



Jenice Bates - January 05 at 09:18 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Elaine M. Patras.



January 04 at 08:38 PM

SL

“ Samantha and Lux planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elaine Mildred Patras.

---

**Samantha and Lux** - January 04 at 08:38 PM

AL

“ Alan & Bonnie LaFollette purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Elaine M. Patras.



---

**Alan & Bonnie LaFollette** - January 04 at 07:39 PM

AL

“ Alan & Bonnie LaFollette planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elaine Mildred Patras.

---

**Alan & Bonnie LaFollette** - January 04 at 07:39 PM