



## Ralph D Exstrom

June 17, 1938 - June 12, 2019

Ralph Exstrom, age 80 years of Valley, NE, died on Wednesday, June 12, 2019. He was born the son of Paul and Thurza (Almquist) Exstrom on June 17, 1938 in Maxwell, NE. Ralph received his Bachelors Degree from Kearney University, and later his Masters from University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, OH.

On August 9, 1956, Ralph was united in marriage to Peggy G. Burke at his parent's home in Maxwell. Ralph spent more than 30 years teaching math, science and computer science and directed numerous plays throughout his career. He loved teaching and directing where he connected with thousands of students - he specialized in helping those who maybe didn't have a lot of confidence in their abilities develop and gain confidence. Many students became good friends following graduation.

He had many hobbies where he brought passion and demonstrated how life-long learning can expand your world and impact. Fishing was at the top of his list - he taught all of his children and grandchildren how to fish and spent hours at Jeffrey Lake (his favorite place on earth!) with them. The 'Jeffrey Fishing Gang' had an annual trip for over 40 years - wonderful and lasting friendships formed at the lake!

Woodworking occupied his time over the cooler months and he developed his

skills from really rough projects in the early years to beautiful creations that many enjoy every day. Ralph was also the photographer at every family event, celebrations with friends and throughout his teaching career. He has hundreds of thousands of slides and photos (on paper and digital!) that document events big and small.

He also had a beautiful singing voice and shared that gift - especially around the house where every occasion could be celebrated in song. He cheered on all the Husker teams - especially the Women's Volleyball team and appreciated Husker Football even in the tougher years - he was no fair weather fan.

Ralph was known for his logical thought process and when he added humor, passion and caring to the mix, nothing could stop him. He was blessed by a loving family and a vast group of great friends and will be missed but has left them all with fond memories'

He was preceded in death by: his parents; wife, Peggy; son, Rodney Exstrom and a daughter, Sue Rolfe. Ralph is survived by: his children, Deb Exstrom of Elkhorn, Steve (Angela) and Scott (Nancy) Exstrom all of Valley; son-in-law, Mike Rolfe of Falls City, NE; Grandkids: Andrea (Joseph), Ashley, Gillian, Rodney, Christopher, Meredith, Catherine and Jessica. Great grandkids: Kenzi, Blake, Charlie, Zoe and Emori; brothers, Paul and Donald Exstrom, and a sister, Mardell Brestel.

Ralph would love to see a 'sea of husker red' from those who gather to celebrate his life, so at a request of the family – wear your Husker gear.

# Previous Events

## Memorial

JUN **23**. 2:00 PM (CT)

United Faith Community Church  
218 West Gardiner Street  
Valley, NE 68064

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ralph D Exstrom*

December 10, 2022 at 09:12 AM



“ *I was 9 years old when Ralph joined our family in North Platte. He was a sweet baby and I helped Mother with his care. Many years later when Leyon and I were married and lived on the farm south of Brady, Ralph stayed with us some in the summer, and drove the new Brestel Allis-Chalmers tractor cultivating corn. A few years ago he gave us a plaque with a picture of the tractor, and on the back wrote of how it was a challenge for him as a young kid to drive it.*

*Ralph made me several beautiful things of wood, like a jewelry box, a small bench, and a large bench. He enjoyed coming to Jeffry Lake helping us with improvement projects, fishing, and playing cribbage at night before going to bed. Ralph was always patient with me when playing cribbage. He would say if I did not find all the count it was his.*

*I will miss my dear brother Ralph. My he rest in peace with his beloved wife Peggy, daughter Sue, and son Rodney.*

*Mardell (Exstrom) Brestel*

Mardell Brestel - June 22, 2019 at 08:26 PM



“ *Fiery Lily and Rose was purchased for the family of Ralph D Exstrom.*



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June 20, 2019 at 05:03 PM



“ *Your friend Sheila purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Ralph D Exstrom.*



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**Your friend Sheila** - June 20, 2019 at 02:28 PM

DK

“ I first met Ralph in the summer of 1972 when Ralph, Peg and the kids were just moving back to Valley from Cincinnati where Ralph had just completed his Masters degree. What a wonderful family to have back in the community. Ralph came across as this big burly guy with his strong voice and strong opinions on any and all topics. Come to think of it, that never did change!! Sue and I had many enjoyable times with the Exstrom family. Also, I had the opportunity to spend time at Jeffrey Lake with Ralph and the rest of the Jeffrey gang. In fact, about 43 years worth!!

I also got to know Ralph in his role as an educator. I was impressed by Ralph's ability to explain mathematical complexities in various ways. I saw a student express his confusion at how Ralph had explained solving a problem. Rather than just repeating himself, he said, " Let's look at it from a different direction" and went on to explain it in a way that the student then understood it.

He was also an educator when it came to teaching his boys. One day when I walked home from school with Ralph, we got to his back yard where he had placed sections of limestone from the old depot around the fire pit. The twins, who were quite young at the time, were standing by the sections and a couple of them had been broken into pieces with a hammer that was laying next to the boys. Ralph asked if they had broken them and they fessed up to having done so. He then asked them WHY they did it to which they shrugged thier shoulders and said, " I dunno". Ralph gave them each a pat on the butt and said, "That's not for doing it, that's for not knowing WHY you did it"!!

I had the privilege of knowing Ralph for 47 years. He was a loving husband, father, and for me a dear friend. It is perhaps best said in the Irish proverb, " There are good ships, and wood ships, ships that sail the sea, but the best ships are friendships, and may they always be!"

I will miss you my friend,

*Don Kramer*

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**Don Kramer** - June 19, 2019 at 01:25 PM

JE

“ *Thoughts and prayers to the family. Ralph was a great educator and more importantly an even better man. I am always reminded of him when using the cribbage board he gave me as a graduation present. Ralph and Peggy were always kind to our family and supportive during mom's passing. Thank you. The community of Valley is fortunate to have had him and the entire Exstrom family.*

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**Joe Evans** - June 18, 2019 at 10:20 PM



“ *Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Ralph D Exstrom.*



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June 18, 2019 at 12:57 PM



“ *Rose Remembrance was purchased for the family of Ralph D Exstrom.*



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June 17, 2019 at 01:52 PM

DK

“*Ralph was my best friend during high school days. We were together nearly every day since he lived one block from me, were in the same grade, and enjoyed all the school activities together from athletics, choir, band, plays, and just hanging out. He played end on the football and was a good receiver. In basketball he played as point guard and was a great long shooter. We were on the same track team. When we had a home game my mother would provide steaks for 4 of us which I broiled for a big meal before the game. I would ride to school each day in the Model T which he had the crank to start! We hunted ducks and pheasants together but were usually unsuccessful. We speared carp, shot the 22 rifle, ice skated, and hiked the Platte River.*

*We did what mischeavios do and got into trouble together, like him stealing cigarettes from his dad, got our mothers to make us a sack lunch, and went to an unused pig house to eat our lunch and smoke the cigarettes! We didn't cover our tracks very well and were found out!*

*We dated together and married those Burke sisters the same summer of 1957 when we were all the mature age of 18 or 19!*

*All of these things made up for a great time of unforgettable childhood memories. A lifelong friend! Thank you, Ralph, for providing those memories!*

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**Donn Kittle** - June 17, 2019 at 08:20 AM

DE

*Thank you for sharing, Uncle Donn. Fun memories- I hadn't heard the cigarette story before!*

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**Deb** - June 18, 2019 at 09:33 AM

DF

“ *Donn, for the Kittle Family purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Ralph D Exstrom.*



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**Donn, for the Kittle Family** - June 16, 2019 at 12:44 PM

RG

“ *Exstrom Family - I am so sorry for your loss. Mr. Exstrom was an amazing influence on my life. He was one of a small handful of people who really pushed me in a good direction. I might not be where I am at in life if it wasn't for his guidance and dry sense of humor. I remember all of his great sayings during class... "Ryan, you truly live in a castle in the sky (as he catches me drawing a picture on the desk)"... "Ryan, there will be a point when you will realize you are not invincible". "Ryan, how can you know where your going if you don't know where you've been (as I'm trying to convince him that history is not important)".... The saying that is grabbing my now though is "Ryan, old math teachers never die, they just fade away." Mr. Exstrom will always live one through his students... and with me he never faded away. He will be greatly missed.*

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**Ryan Grace** - June 14, 2019 at 01:55 PM

DE

*Thank you for sharing, Ryan...dad would have loved to hear your stories and laugh with you and celebrate your successes.*

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**Deb** - June 18, 2019 at 09:37 AM



“ *Glorious Grace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ralph D Exstrom.*



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June 14, 2019 at 01:36 PM



“ *Exstrom Family - You all have my deepest condolences and I want you to know that, like you, I have a hole in my heart. I'm so glad Ralph/Dad/Grampy is no longer in pain and is having a beautiful reunion with Peg and Sue and Rodney!! But he stole my heart with the way he accepted me. He will be missed!! Love to you all!!*

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**Melanie Clevenger** - June 14, 2019 at 08:20 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ralph D Exstrom.*



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June 13, 2019 at 06:57 PM