



Betty Henning

June 28, 1926 - April 8, 2025

Betty L. Henning, 98, of Kearney, died April 8, 2025, at Good Samaritan Society – St. John’s in Kearney. Funeral services will be 11:00 am, Monday, April 14, 2025, at First Lutheran Church in Kearney with Rev. Dr.’s Rick and Michelle Carlson officiating. Burial will follow the service at Kearney Cemetery. Visitation will be from 4:00 to 6:00 pm, April 13, 2025, at the Horner Lieske McBride and Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services. In lieu of flowers, Memorials are suggested to the Henning Family Scholarship at the University of Nebraska at Kearney Foundation.

In Loving Memory of Betty Saathoff Henning

On April 8, 2025, Betty Saathoff Henning was welcomed into the loving embrace of Heaven, leaving behind a rich legacy of love, resilience, and an unwavering passion for music. Born on June 28, 1926, to John “Ehden” and Bernice Summerville Saathoff, Betty's early years on a farm outside of Miller and Sumner were filled with the beauty of nature and the melodies of life. It was by the banks of the South Loup River that she was baptized, finding her faith in Christ—a cherished moment she reflected upon every time she crossed the river in her later years.

Betty attended the one-room schoolhouse at Trapper's Grove, just a short walk from her family farm, where she and her sisters forged lifelong

friendships and learned invaluable lessons. Her love for music blossomed during this time, culminating in her graduation from Miller High School in 1943, and her pursuit of a music degree at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Proudly a member of the Alpha Zeta Delta sorority, Betty's musical talent was evident to all who knew her.

In the summer of 1945, Betty and her sister Arlys joined the war effort, working at a bomb factory in Denver. Together, they embraced the adventure of youth, exploring the city and dancing to the lively tunes of the Big Bands. When she returned to Kearney, it was at the renowned 1733 Ranch that Betty met her future husband, Harvey Henning. They married on June 8, 1947, sharing 68 beautiful years until Harvey's passing . Their union was blessed with five sons, eight grandchildren, and thirteen great-grandchildren, all of whom carry forward the love that Betty and Harvey nurtured in their family.

A gifted musician, Betty dedicated her life to sharing her passion for music with others. She taught piano to countless students, inspiring them with her talent and infectious enthusiasm. At one point, she had a roster of over 30 students, each benefiting from her patience and guidance. She enjoyed teaching and recalled fondly her early years as an elementary school teacher. Even as her memories started to fade, her remarkable ability to play music by ear remained a testament to her lifelong connection to the art. She would hear a song and then belt it out on the piano perfectly at family events, weddings and later in assisted living. The joy she found in music filled her home with warmth, laughter, and a sense of belonging, creating lasting memories for her family and friends. She took pride in being the organist at First Lutheran Church in Kearney, and Johnson Lake's Chapel of the Lake where they spent weekends during the summer.

Betty and Harvey were not only devoted to their family but also to their community. Together, they grew Cash Wa Distributing into a thriving family

business, from a small business which required countless hours of hard work and frugality to what it is today as one of the largest independent wholesale food distributors in the nation. Every family member worked at the company from young ages, working all positions to help the company grow. Their commitment to education was evident through their pride in their children and grandchildren, many of whom graduated from the University of Nebraska. In honor of this legacy, they established the Henning Family Scholarship Fund, ensuring that future generations of individuals in need would have access to education.

Betty loved to travel and explore new cultures, often incorporating her musical talents into her adventures. A patron of the arts, she supported various performing arts initiatives in Nebraska, always believing in the power of music to uplift and unite people. Her culinary skills shone during countless gatherings, where her home and cabin at the lake were filled with the sounds of laughter and the delightful aroma of her cooking. An avid bridge player, she enjoyed thrice weekly games with friends, including her best friend and bridge partner, Marvel Hieke. Marvel and Betty were inseparable and eventually ended up living under the same roof at Northridge and St. Johns. The bonds she shared with her sisters, Dorothy and Arlys, were a source of great joy as they navigated life together.

Betty is survived by her sons, Tom (Mary), Greg (Sue), Bob (Pam), Steve (Stacey), and daughter-in-law Judy (Gary), and grandchildren Chad (Melissa), Michelle Harter (Andy), Nicole McNeil (Jason), Stacy Hurt (Jeremy), Kaleena Shannon (Brian), Mathew (Jamalee) and Christopher, and her great grandchildren Logan Harter (Kheran), Ethan Harter, Kyler Harter, Makenna Henning, Ceci Henning, Bailey Henning, Collette McNeil, Jaxton McNeil, Wyatt Hurt, Kennedy Hurt, Cassidy Hurt, Kaleena Shannon and Katya Shannon.

She is preceded in death by her parents, beloved husband, Harvey, her son, Gary, daughter-in-law, Michele, and sisters Arlys Torrey (Louis) and Dorothy Cherry (Jack), and granddaughter Bari Lou Henning.

As we remember Betty, let us celebrate a life beautifully lived—a life filled with the vibrant notes of music, the warmth of family, and the profound impact she had on everyone fortunate enough to know her.

Cemetery Details

Kearney Cemetery

4400 Avenue I
Kearney, NE 68847

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 13. 4:00 AM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl
2421 Avenue A
Kearney, NE 68847
(308) 237-2259
<https://www.hlmkfuneral.com>

Funeral Service

APR 14. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Lutheran Church
3315 Avenue G
Kearney, NE

Tribute Wall

GO

“ 🙏🏻🇺🇸 With The Miracle Of Technology And By The HandOfGod - AND - With The Help Of Denny At Horner's And Kathy At First Lutheran Church, There In Kearney Nebraska, i Was Able To Attend - Over The Airwaves - Funeral Services This Morning For Betty Henning 🙏🏻 Beautiful - Just Like Her ❤️ The Emphasis On Music, Her Music And The Value Of Music Made It All A So Very Special Tribute 🙏🏻 My Many Many Years Happy Memories Of Betty Henning Is Of A Very Proper Happy Lady, Seated At The Piano Or Organ Gifting The Beauty Of Music To Whoever Was Blessed Enough To See And Hear; And, Of Course, There Was So Much More To Betty Than Just That 🙏🏻🥰 She Was A Special Gift To A gurlikeme 🥹 WeSisterGirlFriends Were Able To Make It To The Visitation Sunday Evening, But It Was Just To Much To Make It Back To The Funeral Today, At First Lutheran 🙏🏻🙏🏻 i Have Said Goodbye ALOT Of Times At Horner's Through The Years And i Actually Lived In The First Lutheran Church Neighborhood And Watched The Church Being Built Backintheday...i Wanted To Be There, IN That Church, So Much Today, And, Spiritually i Was 🙏🏻🙏🏻 ALOT Of Friends From The Past Are Now At Rest In The Kearney Cemetery 🙏🏻 🙏🏻🥰 Goldie, Justoneofthegirls, Monday, April 14th, 2025. Thx For The Blessings Of Happy Memories 🙏🏻 Especially During This Easter Season.

Goldie - April 14, 2025 at 04:32 PM

MG

“ Mike & Bessie Giesler & Linda Giesler purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Betty Henning.



Mike & Bessie Giesler & Linda Giesler - April 11, 2025 at 06:58 PM

MG

“ Mike & Bessie Giesler & Linda Giesler planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Betty Henning.

Mike & Bessie Giesler & Linda Giesler - April 11, 2025 at 06:58 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Betty Henning.



April 11, 2025 at 04:23 PM

TK

“ 🙏💕😊👩 A Beautiful Memory Of A Beautiful Lady, Seated At An Organ Or Piano - And - Married To A Man Who Was Fun To Talk To And Be Around - One Of Those Kearney Nebraska Icons. Ya Know, Kearney Is A Really Great Place And It's People Like This That Are The Reason Why. ...We Went Fishing Onetime, Backintheday (1950s) - Up In The Neighborhood Of The Old Henning Farm, It Seems - i Wasn't To Big And i Wasn't To Smart - Well - Harvey Had To Pull me Out Of The Water 🧑 He Lived A Long Time - AND - He Remembered That Story For A Long Time Too 🤔 AND - IF i Woulda Forgotten It - Harvey Woulda Reminded me 🤔👩 Now We Say Goodbye To A True Lady 😞
Thomas Edward Kelly. IN LOVING MEMORY 🇺🇸 Of A Generation That Is Just About Gone From This Life ❤️🇺🇸 Thursday, April 10th, 2025.

Thomas Edward Kelly - April 10, 2025 at 04:52 PM

ML

“ *To the Henning family,*

Many fond memories of a wonderful lady.

*With love,
Mary Ellen Lantis and family*

Mary Ellen Lantis - April 10, 2025 at 04:50 PM

PH

“ *Oh my stars! One of my favorite people when I was a caregiver at Northridge! So kind and caring, loving her sister everyday even after she passed. She definitely was deserving of the long life she had! I smile just thinking about her! My thoughts and prayers are with friends and family! Pam Houchin*

Pam Houchin - April 10, 2025 at 09:19 AM