



Bruce L. Blankenship

January 16, 1957 - December 27, 2020

Bruce L. Blankenship, age 63, of Kearney, passed away Sunday, December 27, 2020 at CHI Health Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney. Memorial services will be 10:30 a.m., January 5, 2021 at St. James Catholic Church. Burial will follow the service at Kearney Cemetery. Visitation will be from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm, January 4, 2021 at Horner Lieske McBride Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Service. In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to Kearney Catholic High School Foundation, Kearney Community Foundation, or the Kearney Volunteer Fire Department. Due to the current mask mandate, a face mask is required by those attending the visitation and memorial service. The service will be livestreamed and can viewed at <https://stjameschurchkearney.org/>

Bruce Blankenship was born on January 16, 1957 in Superior, Nebraska to Alvin (Dale) and Virginia Blankenship. The family moved to Kearney in the spring of 1966. He married Tammy Davenport on March 15, 1986.

Bruce was a graduate of Kearney High School and Kearney State College (UNK). His professional career spanned 40 plus years and includes stints as a staff member and President of the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce, York Chamber of Commerce, Buffalo County Visitors Bureau, Executive Director of the Kearney Catholic High School Foundation and Business Development Officer at Farmers and Merchants Bank. He had further professional

relationships with the Nebraska Independent Crop Consultant Association, Ward Laboratories, Inc., Nebraska Charolais Association, Nebraska Seed Trade Association and others through a part time consulting business.

While employed by the Chamber of Commerce, Bruce worked with others to organize and initiate the Kearney Visitors Bureau, Economic Development Council of Buffalo County, Leadership Kearney and the Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic. Further he played a role in bringing Richard Young Hospital, Construction Rental, Midway Chevrolet, Cabela's and other businesses to Kearney.

At the KCHS Foundation, he helped organize and implement the GOLD Dinner and Auction, was involved in fundraising for three school building additions, a comprehensive classroom remodeling project and additional operational support to the school. He also worked with others to create a faculty retirement fund at Kearney Catholic and numerous scholarship and special project funds to benefit KCHS students.

Bruce was elected to two terms on the Kearney City Council beginning in 1996 and it was his honor to serve as Mayor from 2002-2004.

Over the years he served as a board member or in other leadership roles for the Buffalo County American Red Cross, KSC/UNK Alumni Association, Kearney Public Schools Foundation, Economic Development Council, The Archway Foundation, Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce (ex-officio) and as a 30-year volunteer for the Goodfellows. He and his wife co-chaired the GOLD Dinner and Auction, he co-chaired the United Way Annual Campaign, was part of the Chamber committee helping move Kearney State College to the University system and served on the Buffalo County Fair Board when big name entertainment was added to the county fair line-up. However, he took the most joy in his 34-year marriage to Tammy and watching the

achievements of his sons Brett, Brock and daughter-in-law Chloe. There was never enough time for his grandsons Titus and Asher who he loved so dearly.

He is survived by his wife, Tammy Blankenship of Kearney; sons, Brett Blankenship of Omaha, Brock and Chloe Blankenship of Lincoln and their sons Titus and Asher; brother, Al and Sandy Blankenship of Waverly; sister, Debbie Brian Craig of Omaha; sister-in-law, Marge Blankenship of Kearney; father-in-law, Bob Davenport of Overton; sister-in-law Konnie and Kevin Turner of Overton; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dale and Virginia Blankenship; brother Gary; nephew, Tim; mother-in-law, Lillias Davenport; and brother-in-law, Danny Davenport.

Cemetery Details

Kearney Cemetery

4400 Avenue I
Kearney, NE 68847

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 4. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

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

Memorial Service

JAN 5. 10:30 AM (CT)

St. James Catholic Church
3801 Avenue A
Kearney, NE 68847

Tribute Wall



“ *Bruce L. Blankenship*

January 29, 2023 at 11:14 AM



“ *Bruce is a brother in the Bond. May his memory be eternal*

Tim O'Dea - January 08, 2021 at 06:47 PM



“ *Tammy I am so sorry for your loss. I love Kearney and had no idea how much Bruce did for this town. Kathy (Gruntorad) Drew*

kathy drew - January 06, 2021 at 11:23 AM



“ *I knew Bruce for almost 30 years.a good friend and a huge supporter of Kearney,
The only reason that I know that he slowed up a bit the last several years was
because of his health, but did the most that he could. He will be missed by his family and many friends. Please accept our sympathy on his
recent passing.*

Dick and Barb Beechner

Dick Beechner - January 05, 2021 at 08:54 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memorial Service*



Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services - January 05, 2021 at 02:29 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memorial Video*



Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services - January 04, 2021 at 11:32 AM

KH

We have lost a dear, dear friend. Kay Horner

Kay Horner - January 04, 2021 at 03:56 PM

KS

That is a wonderful tribute to a great man! Our lives are so much richer for knowing Bruce!

kim Sheldon - January 04, 2021 at 11:33 PM

KR

What a beautiful tribute. So much love for family and friends ❤️

Katie Ramsey - January 05, 2021 at 11:49 AM

CP

“ I met Bruce through NICCA and will miss our conversations greatly. I will always remember when there was a problem Bruce would always stick with it until he solved it. He was very determined and and a role model for all of the young professionals he encountered. He has left a huge hole that will be very tough to fill.



Clark Poppert - January 03, 2021 at 10:31 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Bruce L. Blankenship.



January 01, 2021 at 11:05 AM

MK

“ Mary Kulhavy lit a candle in memory of Bruce L. Blankenship



Mary Kulhavy - December 31, 2020 at 07:06 PM



*“ Tammy and Family,
I was so sad to hear the news that Bruce passed away. He was a wonderful man. My deepest sympathies to you all. My prayers are with you during this difficult time.
Brenda Bierbower*

Brenda Bierbower - December 30, 2020 at 07:38 PM

L(

“ Back in 1972, I met Bruce, for the first time, at Arctic Circle. You see, he was already a seasoned “chef” there, and it was my first day on the job. I knew “of” Bruce, because I saw him at school, every day. He always had a smile and a kind word, or two, for everyone. No one was a stranger.

Bruce was so kind, to me, on my first day at work. He was patient and easy to talk to, about the key information I would need, to be a good front counter worker. If he noticed that I was having trouble, he would step up front to help get me through it, in a kind and comfortable way, so that I was not embarrassed by my mistakes. I remember one day, at work, things were pretty quiet, in the afternoon. The lunch hour rush had come and gone, and I was cleaning the front area, after just having served three ladies the meals they ordered. They sat, out in the eating area, and enjoyed a friendly conversation about their lives and what was new, for them. Just before they left, one of the ladies stepped up to the counter and asked me who the person was that had prepared her hamburger. When I told her it was Bruce, she asked to speak with him. I went in the back, and found Bruce preparing the special sauce for the ranch burgers. I told him that there was a lady who wanted to talk to him, at the front counter. He asked me if I knew what she wanted, since Bruce was an assistant manager, at the time. I told him that I didn’t know what she wanted to say, but had asked for the person who had cooked her hamburger.

Bruce stepped up front, and went to the counter, where the lady stood. “Are you the young man that cooked my hamburger?”, she asked. “Yes, I am. What can I do for you,” Bruce asked. “I wanted to let you know that I came to Kearney to visit with these ladies,” she stated, as she waved her hand toward the two ladies waiting patiently, at the front door, for her. “You see, I don’t get to visit them that often, because I live a ways away. They are good friends of mine. We all taught school together, and we still enjoy meeting up so that we can catch up on one another. I want you to know that I have never tasted a hamburger a wonderful, as the one you just cooked for me. It tasted really good, was the perfect temperature, and had just the right amount of toppings on it. So, I wanted to

thank you, for making my day a beautiful one. The hamburger was the icing on the cake," she finished.

Bruce told her thank you, as she stepped away from the counter, and joined her friends at the front door. She turned to wave, at Bruce, and then walked out into the warm sunny afternoon, with her friends.

I smiled, at her kind words, to Bruce, and turned to look at him. He was standing there, and his face was as red as the tomato he was holding in his hand. We both looked at each other, and tears welled up in my eyes. I could tell, by the look on his face, and the depth of the red, staining his cheeks, that he was humbled, by this woman's kind words to him. Bruce looked at me, and I could see tears welling up in his eyes, too. We stood there, for a moment, in the quietness that filled Arctic Circle's lobby, not saying a word, but both of us, understanding what had just happened.

Bruce went to the area, where the huge griddle was at, that he cooked the burgers on. He picked up a towel, and then looked at me. "If you ever tell anyone about me crying, I will deny it. So let's keep it to ourselves - okay Lita?" I nodded my head, up and down, and then turned to the stainless steel counter, to disinfect it. "I won't say a word, Bruce Blankenship. But once you have left this earth, you won't be able to do anything about it, if I tell everyone that you cried. You are a good person, Bruce, and that lady knows it too," I finished. Sheepishly, I looked at him, and he smiled, as he nodded his head, and went back to making the special sauce.

I have never forgotten that day- and I share it all with you. Love you Bruce!

Lita Madison (Sheldon) - December 30, 2020 at 03:39 PM

DS

“ Danny & Jen Shannon purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Bruce L. Blankenship.



Danny & Jen Shannon - December 30, 2020 at 01:14 PM

LS

“ Tammy and family: I did not know Bruce very well. That was my loss. On those occasions when I did meet up with Bruce -- in a store or a bank or wherever -- he showed me his humility. He had this attitude of "You are important to me, and I can learn from you." I gotta' admit this: I could have learned more from Bruce than he could have ever learned from me! Blessings, condolences, and prayers for you at this time. -- Lennis Sytsma of Kearney

Lennis Sytsma - December 29, 2020 at 10:57 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Bruce L. Blankenship.



December 29, 2020 at 10:38 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Bruce L. Blankenship.



December 29, 2020 at 05:40 PM

“ Yesterday I got the gut punch news of Bruce's passing. Today, I am still trying to find my voice. My heart is broken. Bruce was truly a good, good man; always caring about others and living his life with so much purpose. My life has been nothing but richer, having known him not only as a classmate but as a friend. But, he made every person he knew feel as if they were his friend, like you really mattered to him and he would do anything for you. Bruce was a leader in our class from junior high up through high school. Then, he became a community activist and leader. On his birthday I wished him a Happy Birthday and told him he was the pride of the class of 1975 - no truer words were ever spoken. My husband has been by my side, drying my tears, and I was reading him the posts from you all wishing Bruce well and praying for him throughout his illness. Bill said that he couldn't think of one single person in his high school who would have garnered so much love and respect. He was touched by the outpouring of love for Bruce and his family. It really is quite remarkable. One of our classmates, I will respect her privacy, messaged me and told me that this event makes her want to be a better person, to be more like Bruce. What an amazing testament this is to a life so well lived. I have a deep, heavy burden in my heart. But, knowing Bruce, he wouldn't want us to be sad. He would be thrilled to know that we want to live better, to help others, to make the world a better place to be because he set the example and the bar is very high. When Larry Loescher passed away in a tragic car accident in August 1975, I was devastated. A group of classmates gathered at Taco Johns and Bruce sat with me on a picnic table as I cried. He didn't say much, just wanted me to know that he was there for me. That's what friends do for each other, right? I've never forgotten that. I am just one of many who have felt the incredible compassion that Bruce had. It was just who he was. It was his heart.

I will continue to pray for Tammy who is the love of Bruce's life, their two sons, daughter-in-law, and two little grandsons, his pride and joy. I hope they are comforted to know that we all care so deeply and they are not alone. May Bruce rest in peace, in the loving arms of his Savior, Jesus Christ. We will always love you.

Jolene Near - December 29, 2020 at 04:45 PM

JB

“ *Bruce,
Gone but never Forgotten,
Not Goodbye,
But, till we meet Again!
Judy Wells Bellairs*

Judy Wells Bellairs - December 29, 2020 at 11:27 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Bruce L. Blankenship.*



December 29, 2020 at 09:21 AM

PP

“ *Bruce was one of the good guys. Knew everyone, and if he didn't he would soon. Always took the time to talk to you. Prayers for the family.*

Pat Pennington - December 29, 2020 at 09:15 AM

DC

“ *Dirk Christensen lit a candle in memory of Bruce L. Blankenship*



Dirk Christensen - December 29, 2020 at 01:18 AM

DC

“ In about '71 the Kearney little league Lions team coaches would ask their young catcher, Bruce, to have a short pregame pep talk with the team. We went undefeated that season. The loss of his matured talents and positive attitude leaves a void in the soul of our city and sorrow in the hearts of Bruce's many, many friends. We hold Tammy and all of the Blankenship family gently in our minds and prayers.

Dirk Christensen - December 29, 2020 at 01:16 AM



“ I met Bruce in college and he was just a great guy all around. There wasn't any one he didn't know. He was great for our community and gave endless hours of volunteering. He will be missed. Rest In Peace. Hugs to all the family
Dave and Coleen Bacon.

Coleen Bacon - December 28, 2020 at 07:13 PM