



## Keith D. Heaton Sr.

January 11, 1921 - February 4, 2011

Keith D. Heaton Sr., age 90, of Kearney, died Friday, February 4, 2011 at the Grand Island Veterans Home. Funeral Services will be Thursday, February 10, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. at the First Baptist Church with Pastor Stan Murdoch officiating. Burial will be at the Ft. McPherson National Cemetery near Maxwell, Nebraska at 2:00 p.m. Military Rites will be provided at the grave by the North Platte Veterans Group and the United States Air Force Military Honors Team. Visitation will be Wednesday, February 9, 2011 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the funeral home and one hour prior to the service on Thursday. Memorials are suggested to Kearney Public Library. A message of condolence, tribute or memory can be left at [www.hlmkfuneral.com](http://www.hlmkfuneral.com). Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Service are in charge of arrangements. Keith Darwin Heaton was born in Ulysses, Pennsylvania on January 11, 1921, the first to Walter and Irene Heaton. He had a brother Walter, and two sisters, Vivian and Martha. Walt and Vivian preceded him in death. His sister, Martha Ann Sanford, lives with her husband Ronald Sanford in Painted Post, NY. Keith joined the US Army Air Corps just before World War II started, thus beginning what was to be a rewarding career of over 26 years of service in the US Air Force. As part of the 8th Air Force Command, he served as a navigator, ferrying planes to North Africa, England, and India during World War II. During the Korean Conflict, he flew photo reconnaissance missions over North Korea. While in the Air Force, he also attended college, receiving the Master's Degree at Syracuse University. Later, he worked in Intelligence in the

Strategic Air Command in Omaha, Nebraska. This tour in Nebraska played a pivotal role in his decision to seek a second career in Nebraska upon retiring from the Air Force in 1966. Drawn to the beauty of the Nebraska plains, which in many ways reminded him of the farming country of his youth, Keith started his second career when he joined the Political Science Department at then Kearney State College. During his years at Kearney State, he taught political science, history, constitutional law, and founded the Aerospace Program, an innovative workshop that served to educate teachers from across the region in the art and science of bringing aerospace education to their schools. Retiring in 1987, he pursued his political interests working actively with AARP in a regional and national capacity. He was also a popular guest commentator on local television and radio regarding local, regional, and national elections. Keith was also an avid flower gardener, raising peonies and roses, plus he enjoyed tending his apple and apricot trees, often taking his plentiful harvest to Kearney's Saturday's Farmer's Market. He was also active in the Sr. Olympics participating in tennis and bowling. Surviving Relatives: Wife Maude Heaton of Kearney, NE Sons Kern and Robyn Heaton of Kearney, NE Mark Heaton of Kearney, NE Keith Jr. and Patti Heaton of Kearney, NE Daughters: DeLorres and Pat Pepicelli of Gloucester, MA Gail Bridenbaker of Green Mountain Falls, CO Kathy and Pat Wherritt of Wichita, KS Linda and David MacIntyre of Wichita, KS Sister Martha and Ron Sanford of Painted Post, NY Grandchildren Trent Pepicelli, Deanna McDougal, Jared MacIntyre, Jolynn MacIntyre, Balin Heaton, Tyson Heaton, Stephen Heaton, Nicholas Heaton, Jessica Heaton and Emma Heaton Great Grandchildren Meghan and Jake LeBeau, Alex Heaton, Tessa and Kristie Bridenbaker, and Taelyn Heaton Nieces Irene Fitch, Julie Sanford, Kim Slade, and Karen Mirabelli Nephews Tim and Chris Heaton and their spouses and children Keith was preceded in death by his brother and sister.



# Tribute Wall



“ *Keith D. Heaton Sr.*

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January 29, 2023 at 11:14 AM