



Robert E. Millikan

July 8, 1924 - August 7, 2020

Robert Elmer Millikan, 96, died Friday, August 7, 2020 at around 2:00 p.m. at the Ravenna Good Samaritan Care Center. Funeral services will be 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 11th, 2020 at Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral Home, 2421 Avenue A, Kearney, Nebraska, with Pastor Jeff Zinnel officiating. Burial will follow the services at the Kearney Cemetery. Visitation will be from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday, August 10, 2020, at Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral Home. Memorials are suggested to the family to be designated later. Please visit www.hlmkfuneral.com to leave a tribute or message of condolence. Horner Lieske McBride and Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services are in charge of arrangements.

Robert E. Millikan was born Tuesday, July 8, 1924 in Hawarden, Sioux County, Iowa, in a house built by his father, Lloyd Millikan. Lloyd and his wife, Vivian (Cooper) Millikan, also gave Bobby 5 younger brothers and sisters: Richard, Marceline, Lois, Glenn, and Carol.

Following flooding on the Sioux River, Robert's father was stricken with typhoid. As a child, Robert remembered being a support for his father as he learned to walk again, wanting to go fast, but limited to moving slow. The family raised much of their own food with a garden, fruit and nut trees, a dairy cow and hogs. They even rented vacant lots in town by trading produce so they could grow sweet corn and potatoes to sell. Their home was heated with coal, cobs, and firewood harvested along the river. Saturday nights usually found the family gathered around the radio, listening to "Hawaii Calls".

From his youth, Bob was a capable builder. He remembered a Kentuckian, Mr. Hill, being able to bend wood, so he watched and learned the method. He observed the dragline at the gravel pit and built a working model for himself. He attended Hawarden Public Schools and there, in shop class made knick-knack shelves, a library table, and a bookcase that are still in use in a daughter's home.

When Bob, now known as Slim, was 13, he purchased his first car, a 1930 Chevrolet 2 door sedan. The car dealer made him drive it out of the building, past pole supports. The next day, his father made sure he returned it! About the same time, Bob developed an interest in auto racing. There was a dirt track for Midget Car Racing just a few blocks from their home. He was a driver, mechanic, and spectator at various stages in his life in Sprint, Stock, Indy and Drag Racing. In 1951, he and Dean Wolfe attended the Indy 500 together. On July 4th that same year, he was in a racing accident in Norton, Kansas, breaking his neck and nearly severing an ear. That did not cure his need for speed! He was familiar with tracks across the Midwest and frequently attended the Sprint Winter Nationals at Manzanita Speedway near Phoenix and the Sprint Car National Championships at Knoxville, Iowa. Two of the businesses he owned, Bomil Truck and Auto in Lexington and Truck Parts in Kearney were in line with his passion. In the 1960's, he did a lot of business in muscle cars and especially the Corvette. He rebuilt and restored wrecks and "strippers". At one time, he had a 20 X 60 building packed with Corvettes in various stages of repair.

As a teen, he worked for Harco Construction. He was injured in a construction accident, severing a tendon in the back on his leg. This resulted in so much recovery time, that he was unable to graduate with his class. It also caused him to be classified 4F, so he could not be in the military. Instead, he went to work with his father, driving truck in the building of military bases in South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. That career brought him to Kearney, Nebraska.

In 1946, he met and married Dorothy Elsie Hinkle, a young college freshman,

when he was working for Oscar Rasmussen. They lived briefly on a farm south of Poole, Nebraska. He and Dorothy's brother, Laurance Hinkle, a Navy Veteran, hired on with Peter Kiewit Construction and sailed to Guam on the hospital ship, Hope. There they unloaded cement and Russian lumber for buildings at Anderson North Field, Northwest Field, and Harmon Field of the 20th Air Division.

He and Dorothy moved to Lexington where he worked for Shorty Wilcox drilling wells. During that time, he built two houses out of a P.O.W. barracks building from Atlanta, Nebraska. It was to one of those homes, that Slim and Dorothy welcomed their daughters, Joan in 1948 and Ann in 1952.

In Lexington, he also worked for Platte Valley Buick under Loton Todd and Sam Chandler. He later ran a Conoco Service Station, and worked for R.E.A, building houses on the side (nine total in Lexington) and his business building. At Bomil Truck and Auto, he belonged to a parts hot line, making friends from several states. Several of the friends from his muscle car/Corvette days stayed in contact with him to the end of his life.

In 1977, he married Esperanza Belderol in the Philippines.

After selling Bomil, he moved to Kearney in 1979 and built Truck Parts, which he later also sold to the Herrington family.

In 1984, he and Esperanza moved to Imperial Beach, California, where they resided for a few months before returning to Kearney. In his retirement, he built two houses along Highway 44, south of Kearney, near where Awari Dunes Golf Course is now located.

The most important event in Bob's life was his decision to accept Christ as his personal savior. He and his granddaughter, Regan, were baptized in a joint ceremony at Immanuel Baptist Church. He later attended 56th Street Baptist and enjoyed the Believer's Fellowship there.

In 2011, he had cancer surgery, coinciding with the placement of his wife in a secure memory care facility. He stayed with his daughter in Ravenna for a few months following the cancer surgery and subsequent cataract surgeries. He

then returned to the “ranch” south of Kearney but gave up driving because of macular degeneration. In April of 2013, he moved to a little house in Ravenna. While in Ravenna, he attended the Congregational Church and enjoyed the people he met at the Senior Center.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Vivian in 1987 and Lloyd in 1995; his sister, Carol; brother, Richard; and sister, Lois. His first wife, Dorothy Millikan preceded him in death on December 31, 2012. Esperanza preceded him in death by two weeks and one day.

He is survived by his sister, Marceline Garner of Cameron, MO.; a brother, Glenn (Nancy) Millikan of Gallatin, MO; two daughters, Joan (Galen) Morris of Lexington and Ann Payne of Ravenna. Also left to mourn his passing are his grandchildren, Lanny (Ladina) Morris of Grand Island, Regan (Jason) Tilley of Wamego, KS., Jeremy Morris and Sean Payne both of Ravenna; great-grandchildren, Miranda, Ethan, Callista, Andrew, Ryan, Cassandra, Caleb, and Jonah; great-great-grandchildren, Starla, Ember, and Sapphira; also honorary grandchildren, Lara (Dennis) Norris and David (Amy) Weddel and their children of Texas; and special friends, Don (Tish) Trembly of Peculiar, MO.

Cemetery Details

Kearney Cemetery

4400 Avenue I
Kearney, NE 68847

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 10. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

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

Funeral Service

AUG 11. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

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

Tribute Wall



“ *Robert E. Millikan*

January 29, 2023 at 11:14 AM



“ *The first time I met Bob-o was when my then future husband, Lanny took me to Lexington to meet him at BoMil Auto Parts. While Lanny went out and wandered through car parts, Bob-o asked me if I knew a lot about cars. I admitted that no, I didn't. He said, "Well, you better learn." I still don't "speak car," but Lanny and I were married almost 43 years and always considered Bob-o a treasured friend. When we were expecting our first baby, we asked Bob-o if he'd be honorary Grandpa since both of our dads had passed away. What a blessing he was to both of our kids, and they adored their Grandpa Bob-o, and all of us enjoyed our visits with him. Our family dearly loved him, and we will miss him more than words can say. Love you, Bob-o!!*

KATHY WEDDEL - August 10, 2020 at 09:44 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Robert E. Millikan.*



August 10, 2020 at 12:51 PM

MG

“ My first real memory of my brother Bob was when I was age 6. in first grade at Hawarden Iowa Central Elementary School. We lived exactly one mile from school - 17 blocks in Hawarden. On this particular morning, there was probably four inches of snow on the ground, it was very cold. Bob grabbed me by the hand, and took off running, on the way to school. When we reached the Schoeneman Lumber Yard on 9th Street, one of the officers there saw us, and insisted I come inside and warm up. I did go in, and Bob went on to school. I was afraid to say anything, so just sat there in the reception area until the man said he though it would be all right for me to go now. I did not go on to school - I knew I would be late. So I walked the about 4 1/2 blocks home by myself. Bob remembered this, too, and we recalled all these things in our many phone conversations. How I will miss him!

Bob was reading "Little House on the Prairie" by Laura Ingalls Wilder. I thought it was so neat that he could read, and then put a marker in his book. My first grade level books could all be read at one time, no bookmarks. So I read Bob's book, my first chapter book - "Little House on the Prairie".

Marceline Millikan Garner - August 09, 2020 at 10:28 AM

DT

“ I first met Bob Millikan in the early 60's when I got interested in Corvettes. I had purchased a wrecked Corvette, which was basically just a frame, while I was in Mississippi, but Bob had a customer who needed a frame. I traded that frame plus some money for a wrecked 1963 split window Corvette that he had for sale. He allowed me to work on that car in his shop in Lexington, NE until I had it running and could drive it. Bob was a friend from that day on. Very supportive, patient and willing to train me to work with fiberglass. I worked on a lot of other Corvettes after that while attending college at Kearney, NE. I always gave Bob the credit for the training.

I was still working on the '63 after I got it to Kearney and began dating a young lady. We went to the drive-In movie one night and I did not have the side glass in either door. It rained about two inches and drenched us both. We can still laugh about it today because we have been married 54 years. Thanks Bob....

Don Trembly - August 08, 2020 at 10:45 PM