



Robert M. Swanson

June 11, 1941 - January 4, 2026

Robert Merlin Swanson, age 84, of Kearney, passed away Sunday, January 4, 2026 at Kearney CountryHouse. A Celebration of Life will be 1:00 p.m., Friday, January 16, 2026, at Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral Home with Pastor Eric Jones officiating. Visitation will be an hour prior to the service. Inurnment will follow at the Kearney Cemetery with recognition as an honorable veteran. Memorials are suggested to the American Cancer Society, the Kearney Catholic Educational Foundation, or a charity of the donor's choice. Please visit www.hlmkfuneral.com to leave a tribute or a message of condolence.

On January 4, 2026, Bob completed his earthly journey and joined his heavenly family. His fight against cancer was courageous, and he became a walking miracle. He displayed an amazing positive attitude which has been a model for others. Bob was born in Stromsburg, Nebraska on June 11, 1941, to Rolland and Goldie Swanson. As he grew up, he eagerly learned and developed his committed work ethic in helping on his parents' farm.

In 1960, Bob joined the Navy and served until 1966. He held the critical role of Radio Man on the USS Tolovana during the Cuban Missile Crisis and along the Pacific coast from Alaska in the winter months and Hawaii and Johnson Island during the summer months. It was at Johnson Island where he was aboard ship during atomic bomb testing which eventually effected the crew members' health for the rest of their lives. He also served in the Western Pacific and Okinawa.

In 1968, he married Norma (Schroeder) and they lived a full life together for over 58 years. They were blessed with their miracle son, Josh, who completed their family and they lived a full life together as a close-knit unit. Bob dearly loved his precious family and dedicated his life to their care.

In 1971 Bob went on to graduate from Kearney State College with a BS in Industrial Arts Education. In 1972 he enhanced his formal training with a MS in Education. Bob was a

master educator both inside the traditional classroom and beyond, inspiring students with technical skills and life lessons that collaborated arts, entrepreneurship and creative thinking. He taught Industrial Arts for Omaha Public Schools, specifically at Omaha Northwest (where he was also assistant athletic director) and Omaha Technical School. After pursuing other career opportunities and moving to Kearney, he returned to education, taking a position in Pleasanton Nebraska. He modeled and encouraged his students in creative design from visualizing, to experimenting, problem solving and producing incredible results.

In his lifetime of diverse careers, Bob demonstrated leadership in managerial skills (Stromsburg CO-OP), displayed special machining talent (Eaton's Mfg), refinished and built furniture (several pieces which family members have in their homes today). He and his wife have built and renovated homes, from framing to sheetrock, to roofing and landscaping. For years Bob and Norma raised abundant gardens, harvesting for fall. Bob was an avid reader of many topics, from sports to history, politics, travel, finance and continually learning more to groom his many hobbies and skills. In retirement, they traveled the world over, especially enjoying third world countries and intrigued by the cultures and peoples. They also enjoyed peaceful retreats to Gatlinburg, TN and Branson, MO.

Bob is known for his gentle kindness to others. His friendships were diverse, reflecting his many interests. He generously cared for others. He would listen, observe and reach out in humble, quiet ways. He and Norma were known for their partnership and seen together wherever they went. Of course, they were also found most days with their "coffee friends". Bob's wit, thumbs-up greeting, high five so-longs and positive attitude will be missed by many.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Rolland and Goldie Swanson, also father and mother-in-law, Alfred and Vesta Schroeder.

Surviving him are his wife, Norma, and son Josh, sister Doris Johnson (Dennis deceased) and Jan Jones (Delmar), sisters-in-law, Doris Jones (Gordon deceased) Arlene Krings (Laverne) Thelma Cronin (Richard deceased) brother-in-law Clyde Schroeder (partner, Judy) and a large extended family of cousins, nieces and nephews.

Cemetery Details

Kearney Cemetery

4400 Avenue I
Kearney, NE 68847

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 16. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

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

Memorial Service

JAN 16. 1:00 PM (CT)

Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl
2421 Avenue A
Kearney, NE 68847
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Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album Memorial Service



Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services - January 16 at 05:55 PM

TK

“ The Joneses - Doris, Kevin, and Keith purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Robert M. Swanson.



The Joneses - Doris, Kevin, and Keith - January 13 at 01:26 PM

AM

“ He was one of the best teachers when I was there. He made everything a lot of fun! I only saw him a handful of times since that time, but he always stopped to talk to me, and always asked about my brother who was in his class. He was a class act and will be greatly missed by many.

AmyC - January 12 at 03:30 PM

MY

“ Mr Swanson was a wonderful teacher. Very kind and patient. So glad I had the opportunity to be educated by him. I still have my 2 wood shop projects in my home almost 40 years later.

Myra - January 10 at 04:25 PM

LH

“ We used to call him “Swanie”, so much fun to teach with. He used to call himself the wood butcher and he helped the kids make some amazing projects. He and Norma were wonderful teachers and I remember his easy manner and warm humor! I have great memories of those times!

Leatta Hand

Leatta Hand - January 10 at 02:18 PM

DJ

“ *My sincere condolences to the family of Bob. He was a sweet man. He will be greatly missed.* ”

Deanna Journey - January 06 at 11:12 PM