



## Russell James Hiemstra

July 22, 1964 - May 10, 2020

Russell James Hiemstra, 55, of Kearney, passed away Sunday, May 10, 2020 at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. Private Services will be Friday, May 15, 2020 at 10:30 a.m. with Pastor Adrian Boykin officiating. The funeral procession will drive through the Patriot Park parking lot on the way to the Kearney Cemetery. That will be an opportunity for friends to show their support for the Hiemstra family. Please follow the current social distancing practices in place due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Memorials are suggested to the Kearney eFree Church, Kearney American Legion Baseball, or Kearney Catholic High School Girls Softball. Cards may be mailed to Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services, 2421 Ave. A, Kearney, NE 68847.

Russ was born on July 22, 1964 in Pella, IA to Richard and Eileen (Dieleman) Hiemstra. Growing up, Russ helped his dad on the farm and had fun playing baseball with the neighbors. His love for sport was evident from an early age. Russ attended Pella Community High School where he played football, basketball and baseball. He graduated in 1982 and went to Southwestern Community College on a scholarship for baseball. After SCC, Russ was recruited by Guy Murray to play for Kearney State College where he earned his bachelor's degree.

After college, Russ applied his "never-known-a-stranger" personality to sales,

most recently with Wells Blue Bunny. He continued to play semi-pro baseball throughout Nebraska as well as fastpitch softball and city-league basketball. During this time, he met the incomparable Shaun O'Rourke and swings flew. (Disclaimer: Shaun protested the inclusion of this sentence but was overruled by Russ' family.) Russ quickly recognized she was the perfect mate to produce some strapping young lads. They married on February 6, 1993 and quickly produced the first lad, Mitchell James, on November 25, 1994. Jaret John rounded out the team on May 19, 1998. Russ continued playing sports and then gradually transitioned to coaching as his boys started to play baseball. He coached both boys' teams to state championships. Along the way, he made close friendships with fellow teammates, players' parents and coaches. Russ coached Shelton/Gibbon and Kearney Legion Baseball. In later seasons, he loved having the opportunity to have his son Jaret as one of the assistant coaches. In 2018, he was asked to be the first coach when Kearney Catholic started the Girls Softball team, taking them to the state tournament their second year. Russ enjoyed daily talks with Mitch complimenting the fine driving skills of other cars on the road, frequent trips to the Kearney Area Animal Shelter, neighborhood parties, fantasy leagues and much to the dismay of native Nebraskans, Iowa Hawkeye sports.

Russ was preceded in death by his father-in-law Gerry O'Rourke.

Russ is survived by his wife Shaun Hiemstra; sons Mitchell and Jaret Hiemstra all of Kearney; parents, Rich and Eileen Hiemstra of Pella, IA; sisters Rhonda and David Kermode of Pella, IA, Amy Hiemstra and Paul Damien of Austin, TX; mother-in-law, Mary O'Rourke of Kearney; sisters-in-law, Shannon and Trent Almassian of Grand Rapids, MI, and Shanne O'Rourke of Grand Island, NE.

Russ treasured his faith, family and friends. He felt strongly about widening his circle of giving outside of sports to volunteering, serving lunches through

the Kearney Jubilee Center and sponsoring children through eFree church's Compassion program.

# Previous Events

## Private Family Service

MAY 15. 10:30 AM (CT)

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

# Tribute Wall

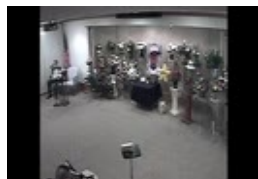


“ *Russell James Hiemstra*

January 29, 2023 at 11:14 AM



“ *1 file added to the album Funeral Service*



**Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services** - May 15, 2020 at 11:03 PM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with your family. Russ officiated a number of our students/athletes' activities. Russ was ALWAYS positive and a good guy. I will always remember his easy smile and kind demeanor. He will be missed.*

*Kurt and Ronna Banzhaf (Elwood, NE)*

**Kurt Banzhaf** - May 15, 2020 at 10:19 PM



“ *Well, wish I had the perfect words to share. Shaun, Mitch, J-Rod, just know we love you guys and will never forget the most awesomest husband, dad and dude anyone could have had the pleasure to know. Prayers and well wishes.*

*Bernie and Fam.*

**Bernie Madison** - May 15, 2020 at 11:18 AM

CB

“ To Russ’s family & friends,  
I haven’t seen Russ for years since our time growing up in Pella.  
The obituary brought a smile to my face as the boy I remember  
grew into a man with a full, if tragically cut short, life. So sorry for  
your loss and sending best thoughts, prayers and well wishes to you  
all. Oh yea...also Go Hawks & Go Dutch!  
Curtis Blom  
Burlington, IA

---

curtis blom - May 15, 2020 at 07:43 AM

RL

“ I'm sorry for your loss of Russ.  
I met Russ, a long time ago, when i work at  
Jack and Jill in Holdrege. He delivered pop  
there. We had a constant gag of "hey Russ  
how ya doing"  
Than I moved to Kearney, where I accidentally ran into at Walmart,  
putting frozen pizzza, in the case. Had a great catch-up  
conversation.  
I really enjoyed chatting with Russ. We recently chatted on the  
hike/bike trail.  
RIP Russ. Enjoy the ball games in the wild blue yonder.



Russ Lemke

---

Russ Lemke - May 14, 2020 at 11:34 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of  
Russell James Hiemstra.



---

May 14, 2020 at 10:39 PM



“ *Gable Gift Box was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



May 14, 2020 at 10:29 PM



“ *Russ was a great guy! He always had a big smile for you. RIP Russ!!*

*Michelle Lewis*



**Michelle Lewis** - May 14, 2020 at 10:09 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



May 14, 2020 at 09:06 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



May 14, 2020 at 03:15 PM

MK

“ John and I met Russ when he coached our oldest son in Shelton Gibbon Junior Legion baseball. He had a patient, calm style of coaching and was well respected by the boys. Through the years we would see him at another baseball game, or while he reffed a basketball game. He would always take the time to talk and ask about the kids. He was a genuine, humble, gracious and giving man who left a positive impression with those he met

Michele Kucera - May 14, 2020 at 02:14 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.



May 14, 2020 at 01:39 PM



“ Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.



May 14, 2020 at 12:12 PM

LD

“ Love, Tim and Jacqui Drey purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.



Love, Tim and Jacqui Drey - May 14, 2020 at 11:47 AM

DF

“ *Darren and Tina Urwiller and family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



---

**Darren and Tina Urwiller and family** - May 14, 2020 at 11:06 AM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



---

May 14, 2020 at 11:01 AM

DC

“ *Well, Shaun, this is a healthy load of life's garbage. Nan and I are saddened to learn of your family's loss. I recall your quiet strength, and yet I am certain you are experiencing the bottom of your heart bleeding in sorrow now, every hour. I have no sage, wise advice to offer. Just love.*

*don cunningham*

---

**Don Cunningham** - May 14, 2020 at 10:43 AM

HL

“ Russ, where do I start. My heart is definitely bruised with hurt and sadness for what has happened to you and for God taking you. I will always remember you....always. You and your family had treated me like one of the family when I went home with you on weekends from SWCC. You are and always been great people. I will remember what we shared, especially that night in Des Moines when we attended that farm system hockey game and the drive back to Creston. Also, playing baseball along side you, all the guys getting together at the "animal house". There's so much I can say. You will be missed. You rest now, for that I will meet you one day again. My sincere condolences to Mr. & Mrs. Hiemstra, Shaun and the boys. Russ, till we meet again..... You Bet! Love you dude.

Hank Lopez - May 14, 2020 at 10:43 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.



May 14, 2020 at 10:34 AM

CT

“ Coach Ashley Ford and the Cozad Softball Team purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.



Coach Ashley Ford and the Cozad Softball Team - May 14, 2020 at 10:08 AM

AJ

“ I am so sorry for your loss, Russ was a super sweet guy & so very kind to all he met. This is a great loss. My thoughts & prayers are with you all



---

**amy ballenger de jong** - May 14, 2020 at 08:04 AM

JH

“ What a great guy, always a smile & time to chat! We were blessed to know him. I know you 'll treasure the memories & draw strength from the support & love that surrounds you! Another Angel in heaven! He will be greatly missed! Sending hugs & prayers.



---

**Jim & Marie Hoppenstedt** - May 13, 2020 at 10:21 PM

RS

“ Just wanted to let you know know that I had the privilege of knowing Russ as a vendor/salesman/rep for at least 20 years. Being a retailer, I always looked forward to his visits. We talked more about sports than product, but he always represented his company well. It is obvious that humility was a strong characteristic of his. I was truly shocked to hear of his passing and I will be praying for God to comfort you with many great memories. Early on in our relationship Russ was able to find my wife, son and I some tickets to attend the college world series. Please accept our most sincere condolences.  
*Ron and Cheryl Samples*

---

**Ron Samples** - May 13, 2020 at 09:03 PM

LH

“ By



Lyell & Karen Husmann - May 13, 2020 at 07:51 PM

MK

*My husband and I met Russ when he coached my oldest son for Shelton Gibbon Junior Legion baseball. He was a fair, patient coach who shared his love of baseball with my son and his teammates. Through the years, we'd talk at a baseball game he was coaching, or the n the basketball court he was reffing. He always took the time to catch up and ask about my kids. He was truly a great man and it was a pleasure to know him. Michele Kucera, Gibbon*

Michele Kucera - May 13, 2020 at 09:03 PM

MG

“ *Russ was a great guy and one of the nicest people you could ever meet. He will be greatly missed!!!*



*Mike and Bessie Giesler*

mike giesler - May 13, 2020 at 05:41 PM

RG

“ *Rich, Julie Jake And Jaci Gappa lit a candle in memory of Russell James Hiemstra*



Rich, Julie Jake and Jaci Gappa - May 13, 2020 at 03:31 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



---

May 13, 2020 at 02:32 PM



“ *My Prayers and condolences for the Entire Hiemstra Family 🙏  
What an incredible Man Russ was !!  
He touched so many lives with such positivity.  
I'm sure your all so proud of the legacy he left behind. There are no answer as to Why God? When this world needed a man like Russ? We don't know , But through our Faith we know God has a plan. 🙏*



---

**Kathy Hamre Jones** - May 13, 2020 at 01:49 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



---

May 13, 2020 at 01:42 PM



“ *Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



---

May 13, 2020 at 08:12 AM

CB

“ So sorry for this loss to your Family... Russ was a great guy and always had a smile on his face and was a joy to be around. He will be greatly missed....  
*The Bacon's*



---

**Coleen Bacon** - May 12, 2020 at 03:05 PM

LG

“ *Larry Giddings lit a candle in memory of Russell James Hiemstra*



---

**Larry Giddings** - May 12, 2020 at 12:49 PM

BF

“ *Bacon Family-Dave-Coleen-Austin&Hailey-Dane&Taylor purchased the Simply Elegant Spat hiphyllum for the family of Russell James Hiemstra.*



---

**Bacon Family-Dave-Coleen-Austin&Hailey-Dane&Taylor** -  
May 11, 2020 at 01:55 PM