



Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea

February 10, 1950 - February 19, 2025

Tim T. O'Dea, 75, formerly of Kearney, passed away February 19, 2025, at his home in Elkhorn. Memorial Mass will be held 10:30 am, March 7, 2025, at St. James Catholic Church in Kearney. Visitation will be from 4:00 to 6:00 pm, March 6, 2025, at Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services. In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to Kearney Public Schools Foundation, University of Nebraska Foundation at University of Nebraska at Kearney, or Dobytown Kiwanis Club.

Tim O'Dea was born on February 10, 1950, in Streeter, Illinois, to Edward and Mary O'Dea. Growing up he spent time in Toluca, Ill. and Burlington, IA and then spent his high school years in Chicago Heights, Ill. graduating from Marian Catholic High School in 1968. Shortly after, he traveled west to Kearney, Nebraska, to attend Kearney State College and play football for the Lopers. He was a proud member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity and cherished the lifelong friendships he formed with his teammates and fraternity brothers. In 1972, he graduated with a degree in Education and later earned his Master's in School Counseling in 1976.

Perhaps the best thing to happen to Tim in Kearney was meeting Peggy Poullos. The two were married in Grand Island, Nebraska, on June 15, 1974, and were blessed with two daughters, Megan and Kate.

Tim dedicated his career to helping Nebraska's youth through various roles in education and rehabilitation. He began his career at the Youth Development Center, holding multiple positions until 1976. That year, he became a counselor at Pleasanton Public School and later served as principal from 1978 to 1988. He often shared stories about his students and kept in touch with many of them over the years. He also liked to joke that a city boy like him had no business driving a school bus down gravel roads.

In 1988, "Mr. O'Dea" moved up to "the Hill," where he became the principal of the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC). He took immense pride in the school, his staff, and the young people he had the opportunity to mentor. In 1993, he became Superintendent, a role he held until his retirement in 2009.

Tim believed that Kearney, USA, was the best place to live and was deeply committed to giving back to his community. He was involved in many organizations over the years, including Dobytown Kiwanis, Kearney Elks Lodge, Leadership Kearney, Kearney Colonels Club, Kearney Goodfellows, and the UNK Alumni Board. After retiring, he continued his service and also volunteered at Good Samaritan Hospital. He loved seeing familiar faces and often joked that his job mostly consisted of answering two questions: "Where's the bathroom?" and "Where's Dr. Wright's office?"

Tim's greatest passion in life was golf, a love instilled in him by his mother. He played countless rounds at Kearney Country Club and Meadowlark Hills with his regular golf group, but nothing brought him more joy than playing alongside his daughters. Many evenings and weekends were spent on the course together, and he rarely missed a tournament they played in—traveling across the country to cheer them on. Always their biggest supporter, his words of encouragement often came with a bit of colorful language, but his favorite piece of advice was always the same: "Take dead aim."

Beyond golf, Tim had a deep love for reading and sports. A devoted Husker fan, he followed football, basketball, volleyball, and baseball with unwavering enthusiasm. His loyalty to UNK athletics never wavered, especially Loper football, where he played from 1968 to 1972. He often said he was a “Loper for life” and took great pride in supporting UNK sports. His passion for athletics extended beyond just watching—he was a steadfast supporter of youth sports, always keeping up with results from high school teams across the state.

Above all, Tim’s greatest joy was his family, especially his grandchildren, Rex and Poppy. As their beloved Papa, he found immense happiness in spoiling them, cheering them on, and sharing in their adventures. Whether offering words of encouragement or simply enjoying their company, his love for them was boundless.

Tim is survived by his daughters, Megan and Brian Jenkins of Omaha, and Kate and Paul Roh of Omaha; grandson, Rex Jenkins of Omaha; and granddaughter, Poppy Terhaar of Omaha. He is also survived by his brother, Kevin O’Dea of Springfield, Illinois; sister, Susan and Pence Parsons of San Diego, California; as well as many special nieces, a nephew, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, friends, and teammates who will cherish his memory for years to come.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Peggy; his parents, Edward and Mary O’Dea; and his in-laws, Des and Alex Poullos.

Tim’s legacy is one of dedication—to his family, his community, his students, and the many lives he touched along the way. He will be dearly missed but fondly remembered by all who knew him.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 6. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

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

Memorial Service

MAR 7. 10:30 AM (CT)

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

Tribute Wall

CP

“ Dear Megan and Kate and families, we are so sorry to hear of your dad's passing. We always enjoyed living next door to you guys and will always remember you. Did see your dad at the hospital information desk a while back and we had a good visit. He was very proud of you girls. All our sympathies. Sincerely, Craig and Betty

Craig and Betty Peister - March 07, 2025 at 01:34 PM

JB

“ Joan and Lori Bachman planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.

Joan and Lori Bachman - March 06, 2025 at 10:25 PM

JB

“ Joan and Lori Bachman purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.



Joan and Lori Bachman - March 06, 2025 at 10:25 PM

AH

“ Andrew, Courtney & Johnny Harby purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.



Andrew, Courtney & Johnny Harby - March 02, 2025 at 05:53 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.



March 02, 2025 at 03:33 PM



“ Megan and Kate: Jacalyn and I are saddened at this news. Please accept our condolences. Your dad was one of the world's very good guys, making the place better for the many whose lives he touched. Sending all good thoughts to you and your family.

George Ayoub - February 28, 2025 at 04:25 PM



“ Please accept my sympathy. I remember a good friend in Tim and Peggy. We did not do a lot social but were good friends. sorry I will miss the funeral, but will be out of town

Dick Beechner - February 28, 2025 at 08:59 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.



February 27, 2025 at 10:28 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.*



February 26, 2025 at 12:32 PM



“ *Mick and Roseann O'Dea purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.*



Mick and Roseann O'Dea - February 26, 2025 at 11:56 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.*



February 25, 2025 at 11:31 AM



“ *Karen E. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.*

Karen E. - February 25, 2025 at 09:42 AM

DM

“ Tim O’Dea was loved by so many of us back in the high school days. In recent years, many of us have been in communication with Tim. We spoke to him on his last two birthdays.

In this photo, all four classmates at Marian Catholic High School, shared a February birthday. The three boys - Tim O’Dea, Mark Novelli, and Paul Allegro - all born on Feb 10. My wife, Pam Petrarca McSherry on Feb 4.

Pam and I have great memories of Tim and are so happy his Nebraska days included such loving family and community of friend.



Dennis McSherry - February 24, 2025 at 10:50 PM

CR

“ Kearney misses the O’Dea family. Marlene and I miss the O’Dea family. This is very sad news.

Chris Richardson - February 24, 2025 at 02:25 PM

DF

“ Darleen M Farwell lit a candle in memory of Timothy O’Dea



Darleen M Farwell - February 24, 2025 at 11:44 AM

SS

“ Dear Megan & Kate. I am so sorry to hear about your dad. No one was friendlier than he. Dick &. I came to know him & your mother when Dick went to work at YRTC. Dick loved working for him. Both your mom & dad were special people. I share your sadness. Sharon Swett

sharon swett - February 23, 2025 at 04:14 PM



“ Megan and Kate, we are so very sorry for your loss. Your dad was a great man that loved his community, students, and most of all his family. He loved you so very much and his two grand-children Rex and Poppy were also his great love. He will surely be missed. Heaven welcomed him with open arms. We love you and our hearts hurt for your loss. Love always, Ray and Di-Ann

Di-Ann Neff - February 22, 2025 at 04:19 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.

February 22, 2025 at 10:51 AM

JM

“ So sorry to hear of Tims passing.we started playing words with friends together many years ago and became friends via text messages.He was a wonderful friend to me and will forever be in my heart. My deepest condolences to his entire family and friends during this difficult time.sending lots of love and prayers from Jo and family in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania



Jo Anne May - February 21, 2025 at 08:59 PM

MA

“ Marshall purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Timothy T. "Tim" O'Dea.



Marshall - February 21, 2025 at 05:58 PM

BR

“ Tim was such a joy to our community here at Symphony Pointe. He was loved and respected by all who knew him. He will be greatly missed. We send our thoughts and prayers to your family during this difficult time.

Symphony Pointe Team

Beth Remelius - February 21, 2025 at 05:22 PM

DP

“ My Dad, Robert Petersen of Texas, wanted me to share this message. "I enjoyed working with Tim for many years at YRTC. He was a wonderful person to work with. My deepest sympathy to Tim`s Family.

Dennis Petersen - February 21, 2025 at 04:18 PM

SD

“Megan and Kate, We are so sorry for the loss of your Dad! I always enjoyed him as a principal and superintendent and he was always good to me making sure the youth had books and videos and great service in the media center! He fully supported the GED program too! We visited often when he was volunteering at the hospital. I enjoyed his Christmas letter and his texts catching up on family news! He will be greatly missed and remembered fondly. Hugs to both of you! Sue and John Divan

Sue Divan - February 21, 2025 at 03:47 PM

DO

“You all are in our thoughts and prayers. Tim was a very important and respected member of our family. We send you each our deepest sympathy.
Don and Suzanne O'Dea

Don O'Dea - February 21, 2025 at 12:05 PM

ME

He told me all about the great call you had on your birthday. He enjoyed it very much, Uncle Don.

Megan - February 21, 2025 at 01:39 PM

CS

“Tim O'Dea was one of the finest classmates ever had at Marian Catholic High School. Always kind and always had a smile for each of us. Loved football. Unable to make our last few 5 year reunions given health issues, he was always with us in spirit! We all miss him dearly. Cathy Schulze

Cathy Schulze - February 21, 2025 at 09:43 AM