



Vola Y. Maul Lamontagne

June 9, 1920 - January 17, 2010

Vola Maul Lamontagne Known for Business Acumen Great Grandchild of the Founders of Grand Island Vola Yolantha Maul Lamontagne of Miller, Nebraska, died in her sleep at St. Luke's Good Samaritan Village on Sunday, January 17, 2010 at age 89. She operated a dairy adjoining Fort Kearny on the Platte River for Ravenna cheese with her husband, the late Rufus Maul of Amherst, before running the bar/restaurant with him at Miller for 30 years. Volais spoken of for her favorite recipe of hamburger soup, her love of music and her strong work ethic. She was fond of quoting homegrown sayings, helping neighbors, and there was a smile on her face up to the last day of her life. Her favorite saying: "God bless you." Vola was born on June 9, 1920 to George and Hilma Ruthstrom Clausen of rural Boelus. She called herself "A Great Grandchild of Grand Island," having descended from two of the founding families, the Clausens and the Riefs. There was music in their home every day, and the Grand Island Band, of which her father was a member, sometimes played in the Clausen's ancestral barn north of Boelus. Mother Hilma was known in the surrounding communities as an outstanding Swedish cook, who later cooked breakfasts and dinners 25 years for the Midway Hotel at Kearney. A tornado took the brick homestead in 1949. Vola loved history and genealogy, and liked to tell stories of her German and Swedish relatives, including the Lemburgs, the Hansens, the Nitsches, and the Blomquists, and how they survived the Depression. In later life, this developed into family stories of Rufus and the many neighbors who frequented Miller's Hi Line

Tavern, now the Miller Depot. Her favorite memory was singing a Methodist hymn called "Eternal Life, at Journey's End" in a contest at Rockville, at age 16, while her older sister, the late Inez Overstreet, played the piano. The crowd called them back three times. As a youth, Vola told confidantes that her secret wish was to be an opera singer. She lost the opportunity to be a rural Nebraska teacher after graduation from St. Paul in 1939, when the family moved to Kansas. They later returned to Kearney, residing at 10th and Avenue C. Two brothers, master mechanics Burdette and Malvern of Kearney, survive, and their eldest sibling was the late Vernon Clausen, who worked for the city. After high school, Vola married Army and Navy veteran Horace Buchanan Merrick, of Troy, Kansas, more lately of Kearney. She often sadly recollected that he suffered shellshock when his ship, the USS Astoria, went down at Guadalcanal, but noted that even after being a gunner's mate, he could whistle birdsongs exactly on key. Their children are Gary, jack of all trades, of Kearney, and wife Donita; Lester, a reverend at Bakersfield, California, and wife Sandra; and Beverly, a professor, of Miller. Vola considered their half brother, Robert Merrick of Lincoln, a son as well. She had many grandchildren; a score of great grandchildren and twin great great grandchildren in Nebraska, Ohio and California; all who have carried on the musical tradition, ranging from bluegrass to popular to classical to gospel music. Stephen Merrick, of www.elephantmanmusic.com, is providing music for Grandma's funeral. At age 80, Vola married Rosario Lamontagne of Nashua, New Hampshire, and they resided in Miller six years before his death on Election Day 2006. They enjoyed the music that has prevailed in their families, and he liked to fix supper for the former cook. His son is musician Rogue Ray of Nashville, and grandson is the folksinger Ray Lamontagne. Other stepsons include Gary and Lee Ann Maul, retired, of Hastings; Bill and Donna Maul of rural Buffalo County, and their families; and Marvin Maul, who tragically died at age 21, while working on the York interchange of I 80. The funeral is Thursday at the Miller United Methodist Church at 2 p.m. with Pastor Bonnie Brock and the Rev. Les Merrick officiating, with graveside rites by

Pastor Brock at the Emanuel Lutheran Cemetery on Daykin Road. Luncheon at the Methodist Church follows. Interment will be by husband Rufus Maul, who died in 1989. Visitation is Wednesday from 4 to 7 p.m. at Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Service at Kearney and one hour prior to services at Miller on Thursday. Memorials are suggested to the family, to be designated later.

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Tribute Wall



“ *Vola Y. Maul Lamontagne*

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