

St. Mary's Catholic School  
Development Office  
313 E Hwy 20  
O'Neill, NE 68763  
402-336-1602

www.stmarysoneill.org  
Facebook: /stmarysoneill/  
jmwallwey@archomaha.org

#### President

Father Bernard Starman

#### Principals

Mrs. Paula Atkeson, '84

Mrs. Jennie Schneider, '84

#### Guidance Counselor

Mrs. Paula Atkeson, '84

#### Athletic Director

Mr. Tony Allen

#### Development Director

Mrs. Jennifer Wallwey

#### Director of Operations

Deacon MJ Kersenbrock, '74

#### Mission Statement

St. Mary's Catholic School is committed to forming students in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, through the hands of Mary, fostering the formation of the whole person, body, mind and soul.

#### Change of Address

To notify us of address changes or personal updates, please fill out the on-line form at [stmarysoneill.org](http://stmarysoneill.org) under the Alumni Tab or call the Parish Office at 402-336-1602.

# St. Mary's Catholic School Alumni Spirit Newsletter November 2024

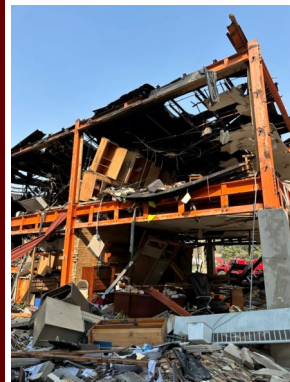
Article shared courtesy of The Catholic Voice by Susan Szalewski, 10/31/2024

## **Pastor counts blessings – and minutes – following devastating explosion**



Five minutes. Father Bernard Starman thinks about what could have happened if an Oct. 7 explosion at St. Patrick Parish Office in O'Neill happened five minutes later than it did. The blast occurred at 5:55 a.m., a time that became frozen on damaged clocks. About 50 minutes earlier, natural gas began filling a parish center after a vehicle traveling at a low speed hit a line that pumped the gas into the building. The ensuing explosion destroyed the parish center and damaged surrounding structures, but the parish's pastor said it could have been much worse.

Father Starman learned that neighbors across the street would have been awake, sitting on a couch, drinking coffee and watching the news in front of their picture window instead of being a room or two farther away from the explosion and remaining uninjured. He said two women who regularly walk together would have passed by the parish center about 6 a.m. But by the grace of God, one of the women decided to sleep in that day, and the other decided it was too cold to be outside. The explosion would have been even worse if it occurred a half hour or hour later, he said. Employees at the hospital across the street, Avera St. Anthony's, would have been arriving for a shift change. Two hours later, parish employees would have arrived for work at the parish center, and parents would have been dropping off students at the neighboring St. Mary's elementary and high schools. By that time, the energy from the gas leak would have accumulated enough to level three city blocks, wiping out the hospital, the schools, St. Patrick Church, homes and even part of the courthouse in O'Neill, Father Starman said.



Instead, just one person was reported injured after the explosion, the 58-year-old driver of the vehicle that hit the gas line. He had been heading to Avera St. Anthony's for dialysis treatment, authorities have said. A fire and rescue official said the man was transported to Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha but has since been back in O'Neill recovering.

Just this week the hospital reopened its emergency room and inpatient care services after sustaining significant damage from the explosion. Both St. Mary's schools were damaged but will eventually reopen, said Father Starman, president of the schools and pastor of other parishes in the Catholic Parishes of Western Holt and Boyd Counties. In the meantime, classes are being held at three different locations in O'Neill. Students in second through sixth grade have classes at Faith Community Church, while students in pre-kindergarten through first grade have relocated to a former public school administration building now owned by Holt County. Space was made available at Northeast Community College for St. Mary students in grades seven through 12. Parish staff members, whose parish center offices were annihilated, operate out of a former law office building.

The community of O'Neill has been generous, Father Starman said, offering much of the temporary quarters for the school and parish for free. Prayers, help and

donations started almost immediately. The evening of the explosion, people filled St. Patrick Church to pray a rosary. "It was just packed," Father Starman said, "like an Easter Sunday or Christmas Eve Mass."

Public and parochial schools in northeast Nebraska have held fundraisers, beginning with [Archangels Catholic High School](#) in Humphrey, which within a day had a split-the-pot drawing at a volleyball game. Other Church communities have helped, too, including parishes in South Dakota that have been taking up second collections each weekend since the explosion.

Father Starman and others at St. Patrick know they're blessed despite the parish's setbacks and ongoing inconveniences. "We've got lots of reasons," he said, "to believe in miracles and divine protection."



## From Father Starman, President

It has been a while since I've included an article in the Alumni Newsletter, but I wanted in this issue to give you an update on the restoration progress following the catastrophic explosion and fire at St. Patrick Parish Center on Monday, October 7, 2024. As you can imagine, we've been humbled, gratified and overwhelmed with the outpouring of physical, spiritual, emotional and financial support from near and far. We are grateful as bad as the day was that events unfolded as they did. No lives were lost, and no serious injuries were sustained. Literally, 5 minutes later we would be telling a totally different story.

While there is still a lot of restoration work to be done, we've come a long way since October 7<sup>th</sup>. All but the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class and the resource teacher have moved back into their classrooms. There are still major repairs to be completed in many of the rooms but the State Fire Marshall approved our return to a familiar learning environment on November 7<sup>th</sup>, and faculty, staff, students and volunteers began moving classroom items back into the building on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Teachers and students (except 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and resource) returned to the building on November 11<sup>th</sup>. The Junior High and High School faculty and staff will remain at Northeast Community College – O'Neill Campus until at least the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester.

ServePro and Environmental Services spent the first couple of weeks cleaning our buildings. ServePro covered the bulk of the space, but Environmental Services handled all the areas that required specialized cleaning because of asbestos and other dangerous substances. We hired Huff Construction, Inc. of Norfolk, NE as the General Contractor for the restoration of the school buildings. They, upon my recommendation, have enlisted as many local subcontractors and material suppliers as possible for the restoration of the schools.

One of the beams supporting the elementary school gym roof was severely damaged by the explosion of the Parish Center. It has been repaired by placing 24" screws every 8 inches along the beam. On a walk through on November 19<sup>th</sup> we noticed a fracture in another beam which will also need to be repaired. Carpet installation is well underway with several elementary school and Jr High/High School rooms requiring carpet replacement due to the embedded glass in the carpeting. The lighting, drop ceilings and grid work for them in the Junior High/High School have been removed and the replacement work has begun. The sod in the "blast zone" areas has been removed and will be resodded or seeded in the spring. The rubber mulch on the playground was removed and a "playground approved" wood composite mulch was put down before the elementary students returned to our building mostly by parish and school family volunteers.

Contracts have been signed for window and door replacement, masonry work, ceiling replacement, roof replacement (all the school and gym roofs will be replaced). There will be some updating to our fire alarm system at the direction of the State Fire Marshall as well. Most of the elementary school restrooms will also be retiled, and a few broken sinks will be replaced (the explosion broke them in two.) The updating of the schools heating and cooling project that was part of our Capital Campaign was paused for a few weeks, but Kayl Heating and Air has been onsite with a plan to move forward. They will be working overnight so as not to interfere with the school day and the restoration progress.

The estimated cost of the restoration of St. Mary's Catholic School is estimated to be between 7 and 8 million dollars. We also continue to move forward with planned restoration of St. Patrick Church over the coming months and look forward to rebuilding the Parish Office in the previous location.

We are indebted to so many through these weeks but most especially to our volunteer fire department personnel, as well as rescue personnel. (4 fire departments, 42 pieces of fire fighting equipment, 72 firefighters, 3 departments provided ambulances and personnel as well. The Holt County Emergency Management personnel, Nebraska State Patrol Investigators, Holt County Sheriff's Office, O'Neill Police Department, Holt-Boyd 911 Center, Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, and volunteers.) But we owe a special debt of gratitude to Faith Community Church, the Holt County Board of Supervisors and Northeast Community College – O'Neill Campus for immediately opening their doors to accommodate our students and faculty. To Jean Muller for volunteering to be the onsite administrator at the Faith Community site, all those who planned and provided "security" at the former OPS Administration building. As well as all those who offered space and assistance if we needed it both long and short-term. Also to Jan Chvala who almost instantly agreed to let us office out of her former office building. Our long term parish office address is **313 E. Hwy 20, O'Neill, NE 68763.**

The schools Principal's Mrs. Atkeson and Mrs. Schneider as all the school faculty and staff hit the ground running and developed multiple plans for our time of displacement and return. I am grateful to all of them for their patience and perseverance through these difficult days. As well as to the St. Patrick Parish Office Staff who rolled up their sleeves and had us "open for business" in 24 hours. Thank you ALL!

I'm sure I'm leaving something out but those are the highlights of the last few weeks. Thank you for your prayers and continued support of St. Mary's Catholic School and St. Patrick Parish of O'Neill.

Ad Multos Annos!

*Fr. Bernard Starman, Pastor/President*

## Greetings to our St. Mary's Alumni!

We have had quite a second quarter here at St. Mary's—like none either of us has ever experienced. The explosion and fire at the Parish Center has been so far-reaching. The damage to the schools took some time to sort out, and will take even more time to repair, but we are thankful that we are only repairing and replacing things. All of our people are fine, and people cannot be replaced! We have been just absolutely amazed at the goodness of all the stakeholders of St. Mary's—from community members, parishioners, alumni, and other area schools and communities. Everyone has been so generous with their time, talent, and treasure. We have witnessed stewardship like we have never seen before! Thank you to all the people who have stepped up in big and small ways to take care of us. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we work to get all of our students back on campus and get our buildings back in shape.

Our fall sports seasons are over. Our volleyball team placed third at the NVC tournament and were district runners-up. Our football team made it to the second round of playoffs and finished the year with an impressive 6-4 record. Basketball and wrestling practice for our high school athletes has begun, and we look forward to a great season in our winter sports! We had one of our senior students named to the statewide Believers and Achievers by the Nebraska School Activities Association & Currency this fall. Annabelle Barlow will be recognized at an NSAA State Championship during the 2024-25 activities year and on a poster sent to all NSAA member schools.

While we have lots of work to do here at St. Mary's, we know that we have lots to be proud of and thankful for, as well. St. Mary's will rise—to quote St. John Paul, who paraphrased St. Augustine: “We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song!”

Our Mother of Perpetual Help—Pray for Us!

*Paula Atkeson and Jennie Schneider, St. Mary's Principals*



The highly anticipated 3rd Annual St. Mary's Red Carpet Gala will take place on March 22, 2025! Mark your calendars for an unforgettable evening, and stay tuned for more exquisite details. This elegant event welcomes all to join in a night of glamour and celebration! For more information, please contact the Parish Center.



Elisabeth & **'04 Kevin Ohri** welcomed home a baby girl Ember Joy on April 18, 2023. Kevin and Elisabeth make their home in Omaha where he is a firefighter.

**'14 Jessica (Simons)** & Eric Derby welcomed home a baby boy, Jett Monroe on June 22, 2023.

**'06 Charles** & Shayla Shields welcomed home a baby girl, Brittyn Darline on August 8, 2023.

Melinda & **'12 Ryan Podany** brought home a baby boy, Calvin Christopher on November 2, 2023.

**'16 Riley (Sibbel)** Riley Bilstein welcomed home a baby girl Marti Ann on November 2, 2023.

**'09 Brittany (Petersen)** & **'09 Matt Boyle** welcomed home baby girl Palmer Emily on November 23, 2023.

**'06 Carol (Koenig)** & Ben Doolittle welcomed baby boy Leo David on December 22, 2023.

**'15 Bridget (Schneider)** & Luke Bulau welcomed home baby boy, Benjamin Timothy, on April 21, 2024.

**'13 Jessica (Pongratz)** & Alec Rockford brought home baby boy Beau Alton on January 10, 2024.

**'08 Jake** & Michelle Reiman welcomed home Tessa Jane on January 26, 2024.

**'14 Kyle** & Shelby Regan brought home baby boy Beau Robert on February 5, 2024.

**'05 Rachael Gray** & Charles Bartak welcomed home baby girl Blakely Joe on February 7, 2024.

**'10 McKenzie (Connot)** & Joseph Rundell welcomed home baby girl Kadence Elaine on March 6, 2024.

**'12 David & Mary Shields** welcomed home baby boy Wade Gregory on March 7, 2024.

**'16 Kaylee (Harvey)** & Justin Palmer welcomed home a baby boy Tyce Evan Palmer on April 30, 2024.

**'10 Avery (Schneider)** & Noah Ehrisman welcomed home a baby boy Bridger Luke on May 11, 2024.

**'14 Brooke (Bauer)** & Cory Keilig welcomed home a baby girl, Baylor Kay, on May 22, 2024.

**'16 Paige (Gaughenbaugh)** & Jake Wilkins welcomed home a baby boy Stadler Benedict on May 25, 2024.

Sara & **'14 Matt Kelly** welcomed home baby girl, Isla Faye on September 24, 2024.

Jacque & **'01 Mark Mahony** welcomed home baby girl, Katie Jo, on September 25, 2024.

**'18 Taylan** & **'18 Mariah (Fahrenheit) Reiser** welcomed home baby boy, Theodore Randell on October 22, 2024.





**'15 Logan Spencer** married Gabrielle Brumfield on March 9, 2024.

**'14 Sydney (Hupp)** and Matt Hahn were married at St. Patrick O'Neill on April 19, 2024, followed by a celebration ceremony on April 27, 2024 in Phoenix, Arizona.

**'21 Catilyn (Reiser)** married Jesse Cline on May 11, 2024.

**'20 Betsy (Crumly)** and Daniel Roche were married on June 8, 2024 in Yankton, South Dakota.

**'19 Cole Rosenkrans** and Sara (Morrow) were married on June 15, 2024 at St. Patrick.

**'14 Sarah (Pribil) & '14 Kyle Pardun** eloped in Mykonos Greece on July 26 2024. They live in Omaha where Kyle teaches K-8 PE at St. Peter & St. Paul School & Holy Cross School, and Sarah is a PhD student at UNMC.

## Alumni Notes

Lieutenant Colonel US Air Force, **'02 Chris Bahrij**, assumed command of the 13th Combat Air Base Squadron on August 5, 2024 at Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, Arizona. The squadron will serve as a model for future Air Force deployments by providing primary base operations support and airfield management and protection to deployed personnel. Chris is the son of Leila & Steve Bahrij. He is a 2007 UNL graduate in Civil Engineering and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the USAF in 2007. He has been stationed in Wichita, KS, Lajes, Portugal; San Antonio, TX; Washington DC; Minto, ND; Brunssum, Netherlands; and currently Phoenix, AZ. Chris & wife Amanda, son William (9 years old) and daughter Abigail (7 years old) reside in Glendale, AZ.



We are so pleased to tell you that our current campaign pledge & gifts total is \$3,486,683! In addition to this, we have \$462,209 that was given prior to the beginning of the campaign (either gifts or memorials) to be used towards either church renovations and/or HVAC systems for the schools. This means our total is \$3,948,592!

We've had a lot of progress with campaign projects, and here are the highlights!

- Concrete work behind the church has been completed. There is still some concrete work to be completed by the grade school, and we need to re-do the ramp. Due to the brickwork surrounding the ramp, it is difficult to remove snow and it never completely dries up so it ices over easily. The plan is to remove the brick and replace it with railways. (This project money has been donated already, separate from the campaign.) The tuck-pointing on the church is likely to be completed next spring. We do not have a timeline on the remaining tower windows for the church as the materials are currently unavailable. Basement windows are in process, and should be completed soon.
- The church HVAC system project had to be moved up in priority when four of the air conditioning units failed in August, so we now have a new HVAC system in the church! Stucco work on the inside of the church should begin soon, and we anticipate the interior work in the church (flooring, pews, kneelers, and paint) to begin next summer.
- We have had a change to the timeline for the school HVAC systems as well. Due to an upcoming change in regulations that would end up increasing our cost significantly, it was decided to order both the grade school and high school HVAC at this time, with the installation to be done the beginning of 2025.

A few other reminders: we rely on your gifts and your faithfulness in following through with your pledges. Thank you to those who are making your payments regularly. We encourage you to set up a monthly automatic withdrawal; it's just a quick form to fill out & can be changed at any time. You can continue to donate at any time - just contact the Parish Office or you can give online at [StPatONeill.org/capital-campaign](http://StPatONeill.org/capital-campaign). Don't overlook matching funds from your companies! Check with your HR Department to see if you can access these funds! Over \$280,000 of our pledges & donations are in the form of matching funds & you can add to that! **Questions? Call Jennifer Wallwey at 402-336-1602.**



This year's annual auction was held on Sunday, November 3rd, and it was a huge success! We had a great turnout for the lunch and auction. Lunch was a hit with brisket sandwiches, potato salad, chips and homemade desserts. Bounce houses were a great way to entertain our young ones with childcare inside for the youngest. The auction included silent auction items, live auction through the ring, an online auction, and a cash and carry section for those who wanted to stop in and purchase something without the auction process! We congratulate our raffle winners—Leah & Eric Chohon won half a beef, Ron Jensen won a 75 inch smart TV, and Shamrock Bucks were won by Doris Filips (\$1000) , Mary Schartz (\$500), and Andrew Krotter (\$250). We cannot thank everyone enough for their support as the auction raised a record breaking \$160,000 this year!



## Once a Cardinal. . . Always a Cardinal

It's a very special year for St. Mary's as we celebrate our 125th year, and we are looking forward to a BIG celebration over alumni weekend 2025. Mark your calendar now for June 27th-29th weekend! We are still in brainstorming process, but we are planning for a celebration of the families of St. Mary's, past and present, and we want to include our former staff as well. There will be opportunities for us to gather together for mass, meals, and other fun times for socializing, as well as alumni gifts and clothing for sale. If you'd like to be part of the planning, please reach out to Jennifer! Also, if you have contact information for former teachers and staff of St. Mary's, we would greatly appreciate you sharing that with us at the Parish Office. Please email Jennifer at [jmwallwey@archomaha.org](mailto:jmwallwey@archomaha.org) or call the office at 402-336-1602.

## Marian Award Scholarships

As you know, every year we award up to two graduating students the "Marian Award." The Marian Award is the highest honor that a student can receive from St. Mary's School. The Marian Award recipients are the students who epitomize the spirit of St. Mary's School summed up in the school motto: "Magnificet Anima Mea Dominum" (May My Soul Magnify the Lord). We have recently established an annual scholarship to be granted to our Marian Award winners. Finances that are donated to this fund will be placed in an account to gain interest, and those who have donated will be shared annually. At this time, donations have been made in memory of Sharon Reichmuth, Don Duffy, and '46 Virginia (Podany) Zemeck. We are pleased to award these college scholarships to the honorable young men and women who exemplify the life of Mary.



## Veterans Wall

We are very pleased to tell you that we have finally completed the Alumni Veteran Wall! It was "dedicated" at the alumni banquet in June of this year and already holds a very special place in our hearts at St. Mary's as a place to honor our military! It is always a work in progress as we find names that were missed, so please don't hesitate to check with us to ensure your loved one (or you) are included. The list of alumni on the wall can be seen at [www.stmarysoneill.org/military](http://www.stmarysoneill.org/military). Thank you to all who contributed to this special project, and of course, to all of our veterans who have or continue to serve.



There are never enough words or ways to tell you all how much we appreciate the support and encouragement from our alumni. Your support is incredibly important in the success and ongoing development of our school, students, church, and staff. Your commitment to St. Mary's is not only a profound gift but also a testament to the values we hold dear—values that have been instilled in us across generations. Your encouragement and prayers make a significant impact, providing a sense of strength and fortitude for the future. Knowing that we have the support of alumni like you inspires us to continue to strive for excellence and to carry forward the legacy of St. Mary's. Thank you once again for your unwavering support and belief in the mission of our school.



Keeping up with all of you is no easy task! We love to hear from our alumni about how they are doing and any news they may have to share! We also REALLY love when you keep us up to date with your address & email address, so we don't have to pay return postage & go through the challenge of locating you! You can visit our website at [www.stmarysoneill.org/alumni-updates](http://www.stmarysoneill.org/alumni-updates) and fill out updated information there. (Parents—let's get your kids listed at their own addresses! :) Or reach out to Jennifer at the parish office at 402-336-1602 or email [jmwallwey@archomaha.org](mailto:jmwallwey@archomaha.org). Thank you!

## Upcoming EVENTS

### Catholic Schools Week

January 26-31, 2025

Kick off Mass for Catholic Schools week on January 26 at 10:30 am

### 2025 Red Carpet Gala

March 22, 2025

### Alumni Volleyball & Basketball Tourney

April 5, 2025 at O'Neill High School

### St. Mary's Class of 2025 Graduation

May 11, 2025

### 125th Anniversary Celebration/ Alumni Weekend

June 27-29, 2025

## Please Note:

Throughout the newsletter, you will find various items you may wish to support financially. You can find a form on the back of the newsletter to fill out regarding these, or donations may be made online at [give.smcards.org](http://give.smcards.org).

In Loving Memory



**'41 Mildred "Millie" (O'Malley) Goggins** passed away July 9, 2019 at her home in Whittier California. She is survived by her children Colleen Price, David Goggins, John (Janet) Goggins, Mary Kay Goggins, Mark Goggins, Jeanine (Hugh) Heron, 3 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her brother Leo O'Malley and her sister '46 Loretta Hargaden and numerous nieces and nephews. Her sister '38 Teresa (O'Malley) Dewey passed away in 2021 and her brother Jerry O'Malley passed away in 2022. Mildred was preceded in death by her husband James, infant son Lawrence and her sisters, '36 Sister Mary Faith OP (Isabelle), '33 Eileen Dowd, '33 Ednamarie Haggerty, her brother Joseph O'Malley, and infant grandson William Heron.

**'38 Teresa (O'Malley) Dewey** passed away at the age of 101 on June 27, 2021. Teresa is survived by daughters Teresa Donohoe and Ann Dewey, 3 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren, brother Leo O'Malley, sister '46 Loretta Hargaden, and numerous nieces & nephews. Teresa was predeceased by her husband Loring James, siblings '33 Eileen Dowd, '33 Ednamarie Haggerty, '36 Sister Mary Faith O.P. (Isabelle), Joe O'Malley, '41 Millie Goggins, and son in law Thomas Donohoe. Her brother Jerry passed away in January of 2022.



**'67 Steve McDonald** passed away on November 27, 2023. After graduation, Steve attended John F. Kennedy College in Wahoo before enlisting in the United States Navy in 1970. He was honorably discharged on Jan. 14, 1974. His book, "A Sailor's Adventures" chronicles some of his more memorable times in the Navy. After his parents moved to Bellevue, Steve returned to O'Neill where he was an electrical contractor and worked for Green Pastures. Steve enjoyed working on his cars and trucks. He also loved to fly planes and attended many EAA Airventure Fly-in Conventions in Oshkosh, WI. Steve is survived by his mother Martha McDonald; his five siblings '68 Stuart (Tamie) McDonald, '70 Jeanne McDonald, '73 Pam McDonald, '77 Tim McDonald and '80 Cindy (Verlon) Barnes; ten nieces & nephews; and eleven great-nieces & great-nephews. He was preceded in death by his father James McDonald.



**'60 Pauline (Mahony) Carr** passed away on January 13, 2024. She was number 7 of 14 children born to Charles & Theresa Mahony. Her large Irish family was her greatest treasure and source of pride and joy. She had a life-long career in nursing and was married to the love of her life, Jim Carr for 52 years. She was known for her quick wit, dry humor, sarcasm, and Irish orneriness. Pauline is survived by 3 children, Sean (Kellie) Carr, Kara (Michael) Stephens, and Erin (Shane) Mercer, 6 grandchildren, 8 siblings, '54 Bette Boyle, '57 Charlene Boyle, '59 Charles (Diane) Mahony, '61 Aggie (Paul) Halverson, '63 Rosie Cooley, '65 Mike (Kim) Mahony, '72 Kevin (Patty) Mahony, and '74 Theresa (Gary) Parker, in-laws Elva Mahony, '47 Frank Rohde, Jim Gallagher, '60 Sharon & Larry Roach, and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband Jim in 2020, 5 siblings, '52 Maureen Rohde, '53 Mary Jo Gallagher, '56 Karen (Nick) Ramold, '68 Sr. Colleen Mahony, and '66 Pat Mahony, in-laws '48 Ed Boyle, '51 Dick Boyle, Ron Cooley, Gene (JoAnn) Carr, Darrell ('55 Cece) Carr, and '65 Pat (Debra) Carr.



**'53 Ann (Connot) Harmon** passed away on January 25, 2024 in Grand Island Nebraska. She was a pharmacy technician for 20 years before retiring and enjoyed camping, hunting, fishing, and traveling with her husband. Ann is survived by one daughter & son-in-law, Patricia (Don) Irvine; son & daughter-in-law, Vince (Natasha) Harmon; eight grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her husband, Donald and siblings Lawrence, '56 Leonard, and Herman, Mary Talcott, Agnes Sherman, and Theresa Betcher.



**'65 Kathleen "Kitty" (Wanser) Hamilton** died on February 8, 2024. As the youngest of eight children to Sheila and Max Wanser, her name was a gift from her siblings, her parents being plum out of names by that point. Kitty's early years were split between O'Neill and Ewing. She attended Assumption Academy and St Mary's High Schools. Her greatest achievement and source of pride were her three daughters whom she raised in Missouri Valley, Iowa. Her large extended family was a source of loyalty, pride and fun. Forever the baby sister, she kept life-long friendships with her brothers and sister. Kitty was delighted and interested in her niece's and nephew's lives (and eventually their children's lives.) Kitty's legacy continues through her family: daughters Nicolle Hamilton, Michelle (Roger) Pearce, Megan (Joel) Berman, and 3 grandchildren.



**'66 Elizabeth C. (Hynes) Spitzenberger** passed away May 5, 2024. Elegant and graceful, her beauty and wit did not preclude resilience, and she was that rare symphony of glamor, salt, style, and fortitude. She kept a nurturing, inviting home, volunteered for charitable organizations much of her life, loved great wine & food and reading mystery novels, and was a devout Roman Catholic her entire life. She was predeceased by her siblings '42 Pat, '71 John, '49 Margaret Niseen, '73 Mary Tikalsky, '56 Matt, and '61 Bill. She is survived by her husband '62 Jim, brother '59 Terry, children Joe (Kara), Nicole, and Catherine (Heath), 4 grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.





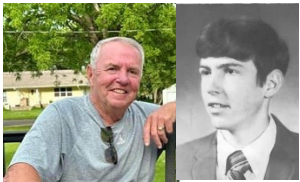
**'79 Ron Schmitz** passed away on June 17, 2024 in Sioux Falls, SD.



**'43 Anna Mae (Meyer) Brown** passed away on June 21, 2024. Anna Mae was a jack-of-all-trades and master of none. She taught country school in Gregory and Tripp counties; worked for two years at the Winner Nursing Home, five years at the Adjustment Training Center and worked as a dental assistant for seventeen years. Anna Mae is preceded in death by her husband Willard Rex Brown, sister '41 Sr. Bernard Meyer, son Richard Dean Brown, and 2 grandchildren. She is survived by four children: Vernon Brown (Joan), Annette Bell (Jerry), Darla Ryan (Rod), and Rodney Brown (JoAnn); sister '45 Agnes Muller, and multiple grandchildren and great grandchildren.



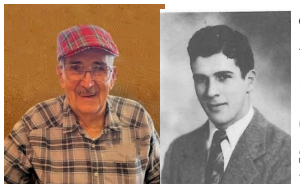
**'55 Catherine (Kay) (Martin) Shoemaker**, passed away on June 23, 2024 after a large stroke. Kay enjoyed working in the yard, crocheting, reading, and spending time with family. To know Kay was to love her. There is no sweeter smile, infectious laugh, or greater love of shopping than had by Kay. Everyone will be happy to know that she will indeed be buried in her signature hot pink Sketchers. Her fantastic ability to tell a story will be missed by all. Kay dedicated her life to her Lord and her church at St. Patrick's. Kay leaves to mourn, one sister '51 Judy Shaw; granddaughter, Christy (Colter) Bowers and her great granddaughter Freyja. She leaves behind many nieces and nephews as well as most of the Chambers community who will remember her fondly. She is preceded in death by her parents; husband Red; son Joe; two brothers, '36 Don and '45 Ed; three sisters, '38 Margaret, '42 Mary, and '50 Ann.



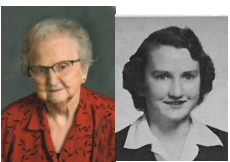
**'72 Ron "Ronnie" Schmit**, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, son, brother and friend, passed away at the age of 69 on June 23, 2024. He leaves behind a legacy of hard work, laughter, and unwavering love for his family and friends. Ron had a passion for living life to the fullest. He had a sharp wit and a gift for sarcasm paired with a smile that could light up any room. After meeting through a mutual friend, he shared a marriage with the love of his life and dancing partner, Pat, for 49 years. Family was at the heart of Ron's world. He cherished every moment with them, creating lasting memories filled with laughter and love that included a healthy dose of ridicule. He is survived by his wife Pat; daughter, Becci (Jeff) Blaesing ; 4 grandchildren; and mother, '46 Eileen (Engler) Schmit. He is preceded in death by his son, Eric and father, John.



**'49 Evelyn (Meusch) Obermire** passed away on July 11, 2024 at the age of 94. After high school Evelyn stayed home and helped her family on the ranch working for cattle instead of wages. When she married Vincent Obermire in 1952, she already had a small cattle herd of her own. Besides the ranch Evelyn was very proud of the little band she and Vince had, playing all over the area for various events. Evelyn is survived by her sons Steven & Lawrence, a sister '59 Carmen (Melvin) Benson, and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband Vince and a brother Don Meusch.



**'47 Joseph "Jerry" Tomjack** passed away August 15, 2024. In 1949 he enlisted in the US Army – 14th Regimental Combat Team stationed at Ft. Carson, Colorado. On June 16, 1953 he married Jeanette Taylor after meeting at the Neligh roller rink. They were married 68 years. Jerry served 25 years on the Ewing Village Board, 12 years as mayor, and also served on the Holt County Board of Supervisors and was a member of St. Peter's Church Parish Council. He enjoyed many things. Foremost was family. They traveled many miles supporting grandkids in all their activities. Jerry is survived by his children Kathi (Rich) Rethwisch, Dr. Jeff (Kim) Tomjack, and Mike (Chris) Tomjack, 10 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren and 2 on the way, and many nieces, nephews and friends. He was preceded in death by wife Jeanette, 9 yr old son Stephen, half-brother Grover Shaw, stepbrother Robert Knapp (Lois), brother & sister-in law Merv & Phyllis Murray, and Dave Murray.



**'56 Rita Boyle Grosse** passed away on October 6, 2024 in Fremont Nebraska. She moved about a lot over the years during her husband Ken's service in the US Air Force before settling in Fremont. She loved her church, her family, watching her grandchildren, helping others, and a good joke, and always made those around her feel loved. She was preceded in death by her infant daughter, Annette; six sisters, '49 Delores Schneider, '53 Rosalia Crawford, '47 Sr. Regina Boyle, '54 Charlene Gaughenbaugh, Cecila Boyle and '51 Bridget Ramold; sister-in-law Jan Cromwell; brothers-in-law, Walt Grosse, Don Schneider, Joe Ramold, George Ramold, Arnold Crawford, Harold Parks, Lonnie Klintobe, Gene Cromwell, and Delbert Hilkemeier and parents-in-law, Carl and Anna. She is survived by her husband, Ken Grosse; sons, Todd (Wendy) and Kent (Meg); daughter, Ellen (Dean) Gacita; sisters, '49 Mary Klintobe, '52 Elaine Ramold, '58 Theresa Parks, '60 Helen (Dennis) Cunningham, and '60 Frances (Lyle) Gillogly; 5 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren, and sister-in-law, LaDonna Grosse.

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