



Wilmer Merle Loewen

JUN 6, 1935 - APR 8, 2023



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Merle was born on June 6, 1935 to William W. and Margaret J. (Isaac) Loewen in Dodge City, KS. Merle and his parents lived on a farm in Meade County KS, and in 1937 they welcomed Roland Dean into their family. Merle and his brother, Rollie, had fun times playing and competing at sports on the farm, in between helping with chores. Since both extended families lived in the area, the boys also enjoyed many adventures with their cousins. The family was part of a German Mennonite community of farmers and so the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church was a central part of their lives. At the age of 12 Merle was baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ. He attended a country school through eighth grade and then he went on to the Meade Bible Academy, where he played basketball and sang in numerous musical groups. He graduated in 1953 with a High School diploma. Merle first attended Tabor College in Hillsboro, KS and then went to Omaha, NE to attend Grace College of the Bible. There he began courting Betty June Harder who was also from Meade. After they both received a three-year diploma at Grace College, they married July 6, 1956 at their home church.

Merle and Betty moved to Topeka, KS where he fulfilled his CO Service at Menninger's Psychiatric Hospital while taking education classes at Washburn University. Betty also worked at Menninger's until the arrival of their first child, Michelle Renae in 1958. Their second child, Steven James, was born in 1960. After Merle completed his Degree at Washburn, he was offered a job teaching High School Political Science and History in Gardner, KS. He taught there for four years, and then the family moved to Haysville, KS where he taught for only one year. It was here that Don Learned became his life-long friend while they taught together. When Emporia State University called to offer a position at their Laboratory School, Roosevelt High, Merle made another career move. He remained at Emporia in the University's Education department after the Lab School was closed. He received two advanced degrees, one in Education and one in



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Counseling during his time at ESU. Merle chose to pursue working as a High School Counselor at Eudora, KS from 1978-1984. He then finished his career in Ellinwood, KS as the High School Counselor, 1984-1997. He and Betty were very involved with their church, First Baptist of Ellinwood. They both sang in the choir and worked with the AWANA program. Merle also served as a church Deacon. One of his great joys was singing with the Kansas Mennonite Mens Choir and traveling with them to give concerts across the US and in Europe. At the same time Merle pursued an interest in genealogy and published several articles, including one about his grandfather Jacob F. Isaac. Merle and Betty enjoyed traveling to Africa and to Europe, as well as going to visit grandchildren in Emporia, KS and in Tulsa, OK. This season of life ended when Betty passed away in December 2015.

In October 2017, Merle decided to move to Tulsa, OK to be close to Michelle and her husband, Greg Bennett. He lived at University Village Retirement Community until a move to Heritage Point Memory Care was necessary. He was a member of South Tulsa Baptist Church where he enjoyed making new friends and singing in the choir. He also sang with the University Village Singers for a while. Merle was known for his sense of humor and his ready smile.

After a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease, Merle passed away to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus on Saturday, April 8, 2023. Merle is survived by his children: Michelle & Greg Bennett, Steve & Lisa Loewen, and his grandchildren: Emily & Evan McCall, Nate & Rebecca Loewen, Jeremy & Taylor Loewen, Andrew & Ashley Bennett, Amy & Daniel Knight, Dustin & Sarah Loewen, Brandon & Shannon Loewen, Joshua Loewen and Melissa Loewen. He also had eighteen great-grandchildren.

The family would like to express deep appreciation to Transitions Hospice for their wonderful care.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to First Baptist Church, 503A SE 110 Ave., Ellinwood, KS 67526, or to South Tulsa Baptist Church, 10310 S Sheridan, Tulsa, OK 74133 for the Sonshine Room.

To plant a beautiful memorial tree in memory of Wilmer Merle Loewen, please visit our Tree Store.



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