



Dr. Larry D. Birch

September 22, 1951 - May 13, 2026

NORFOLK – Celebration of life service for Dr. Larry D. Birch, 74, of Pierce, Nebraska will be held at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, May 28, 2026 at the First Presbyterian Church in Norfolk. Pastor Brian Johnson will be officiating the service. The service will be live-streamed on the Stonacek Funeral Chapel Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/stonacekfuneralchapel/>. Inurnment will be held at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, May 28, at the Lambrecht Cemetery, rural Pierce. Visitation will be 5:00-7:00 p.m., Wednesday, also at the First Presbyterian Church. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the family to be intended for the First Presbyterian Church/Daycare to help defray the costs of childcare for families in need, the Nature Conservancy of Nebraska, and the Pierce Senior Center. Military rites will be conducted at the cemetery by the Tomek-Otto Post 72 American Legion of Pierce and the United States Army Honors Guard. Stonacek Memorial Chapel is in charge of the arrangements.

Larry D. Birch MD, passed away peacefully on May 13, 2026 at Methodist Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska in the presence of his oldest son, Nate and his wife, Mary. He was born on September 22, 1951 in Lincoln Nebraska. A determined, independent man Larry battled Parkinson's disease for fifteen years.

Larry reveled in his life as a physician. He graduated from the University of

Nebraska College of Medicine in 1978. His residency in internal Medicine was completed at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1981. Larry's work was his passion. He loved the challenges and the problem solving involved. He was a gifted student and doctor with a prodigious memory. Larry was a scientist at heart with an insatiable curiosity about many things including - early childhood education, environmental science, scientific research, cutting edge construction methods and economics. His legacy lives on in the many lives "Dr. Birch" touched via a busy medical practice.

Larry served his country in the US Army as a military physician, treating all manner of illnesses and injuries and teaching Army medics. He was sought after for his abilities at managing triage. While in the army he also served at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In 1985 upon leaving the Army the Birch family moved to Pierce, Nebraska. Larry took over the practice of retiring physician, Dr. John Calvert. Later he opened a private practice, Norfolk Internal Medicine in Norfolk, Ne where he practiced until being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in February of 2011. He continued to work in local clinics and for the State of Nebraska doing disability physicals until 2021.

Larry was captivated by the life of his great-grandfather, Frank Birch, a Civil War orphan and pioneer homesteader in Pierce County. It seems they shared a similar tough resolve, dogged tenacity, ambition and the risk taking needed to face the hard challenges of life.

From his great grandparents - Frank and Jane Birch and his grandparents Homer and Georgia Birch- Larry knew of or witnessed large and small acts of generosity and caring for people in need. Concern for those in need and generosity became cornerstones in his life.

Larry's interests beyond his work life included a love of aviation. Flying in fact was his first ambition. In 1969 upon graduating from Lincoln High School in Lincoln, Nebraska, Larry had planned to enlist in the U.S. Army and be trained

to fly helicopters in Vietnam. One of Larry's claims to fame was that he obtained both his driver's license and pilot's license upon turning sixteen. He had to work hard and pinch pennies -sacking groceries and delivering newspapers - to pay for those flight lessons.

Larry also loved history, especially military history and reading biographies. He and Mary read many books together outloud. They were married at First Plymouth Congregational Church in Lincoln, Nebraska in the courtyard on June 30, 1973 after a courtship centered around dates on bicycles.

Larry is survived by his wife of 52 years, Mary Ellen (Lewandowski) Birch. His children Nathan Birch of Omaha, Aaron Birch of Colorado Springs, CO and Libby Lewandowski of Friend, NE Grandchildren Paige Birch, Claire Birch, Brooke Dewar -Birch, Sophia Birch, Natalie Nutzman, Izaak Nutzman and Wyatt Pearson. Sisters Sonney (Bob) Hickman, Jean (Bob) Mahlquist, Georgia Birch, step brother Garvin Meahan (June) of Coronado, California and nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father Robert P. Birch and his mother, Norma Troutt. Honorary casket bearers will be his grandchildren: Paige Birch, Claire Birch, Brooke Dewar-Birch, Sophia Birch, Natalie Nutzman, Izaak Nutzman and Wyatt Pearson

Condolences may be expressed to the family on-line at www.stonacekfuneralchapel.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 27. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

the First Presbyterian Church
104 S 10th St,
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-1635

Service

MAY 28. 10:30 AM (CT)

the First Presbyterian Church
104 S 10th St,
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-1635

Tribute Wall

Jl

“ Jolanta Iwanicka purchased the *Pretty Please* for the family of Dr. Larry D. Birch.



Jolanta Iwanicka - June 05 at 07:10 AM

Jl

“ Jolanta Iwanicka planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Larry D. Birch.

Jolanta Iwanicka - June 05 at 07:10 AM

LD

“ I worked alongside Dr. Birch “in the trenches” of the old ICU at Lutheran/Faith for 23 years, until his retirement. I respected him as a highly intelligent and compassionate physician. It was a treat to later know him (and Mary) more personally through First Presbyterian and Master Gardeners. His scope of knowledge and curiosity were astounding! And his courage and perseverance were inspiring. Isaiah 40:31

Linda Douglas - June 04 at 12:06 PM



“ Jolanta Iwanicka lit a candle in memory of Larry Birch



Jolanta Iwanicka - May 29 at 03:44 AM

SH

“ Larry was my younger brother. As children growing up in a turbulent environment we clung to each other for comfort and security. As adults our lives led us to become estranged for many years. We were granted the blessing of coming full circle and we reunited in our advanced stage of life. Throughout my life I have always carried my little brother in my heart. I have always held the upmost respect for Larry's many great accomplishments and was truly proud of how determined and steadfast he was in his pursuit to make a better life for himself and his family. I believe Larry is at peace now and I will forever continue to keep him in my heart.

Sonney Hickman - May 28 at 06:09 PM

JT

“ I have such fond memories of Uncle Larry when I was growing up. My Mom and I were simply elated whenever Uncle Larry and Aunt Mary were coming to visit. I was always intrigued by his intelligence and stealth focus in life. I admired his intensity and tenacity. My Mom (his older sister) was so proud of his accomplishments . Uncle Larry was always the daredevil little brother that was coached by his older sister to take on all kinds of shenanigans and hearing him tell those stories was often highlights of our visits. I am grateful that despite the many states separating us, we still managed to get together in recent years to reminisce.

julie Taylor - May 27 at 10:48 PM

JG

“ Jim and Kari Galyen purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Dr. Larry D. Birch.



Jim and Kari Galyen - May 27 at 08:52 AM

AA

“ Angie Anderson purchased the *Serene Retreat* for the family of Dr. Larry D. Birch.



Angie Anderson - May 26 at 03:17 PM

AA

“ Angie Anderson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Larry D. Birch.

Angie Anderson - May 26 at 03:17 PM

RM

“ Rexann M. purchased the *Sacred Duty Spray* for the family of Dr. Larry D. Birch.



Rexann M. - May 25 at 07:57 AM

DF

“ Dear Mary Ellen, and Family,
You and your family have our deepest sympathy. Dr Birch was a very knowledgeable and caring physician.
We remember when you and your young family celebrated the 4th of July at our home.
May God give you strength and courage during this difficult time.

Dr. Herbert & Sondra Feidler - May 23 at 09:05 PM

DO

“ Dr. Birch was my cherished physician for over 20 years. He guided me through life-threatening medical situations as well as the run-of-the-mill ones, and I always learned a great deal from him with every contact. The man knew more than something about everything, which always amazed me! He was truly a gifted man in so many ways, and I'm SO GRATEFUL that God led me to him. Rest in peace, my beautiful Dr. Birch!

Diane Owen-Downs - May 23 at 11:52 AM



“ My deepest sympathies to the family. Dr Birch was my families Dr for many years. He was the Best!! He was a very smart man, with the most caring and compassion for his patients!! Sue Schilousky

Sue Schilousky - May 22 at 10:50 PM

MS

“ In 2009, I had an attack of severe dizziness and nausea. I had not met him before, but went to see Dr. Birch. Thank goodness for his expertise and caring. He diagnosed me right away with vertigo and prescribed medicine to help. I was so impressed by his knowledge and professionalism. My sincere condolences to his family. Dr. Birch was a great human being. He will certainly be missed.

Melinda Simonsen - May 22 at 07:16 PM

CM

“ I never had the privilege of meeting Dr Larry Birch, but I do know his son, Dr. Nate Birch. Through Nate's stories about his father and their family, I feel as though I knew him in some small way. More than that, I see Dr. Birch's legacy reflected in Nate's empathy, kindness, and dedication to the art and science of medicine. The world is brighter and better because of the lives both of these physicians have touched. May his memory bring peace and comfort to all who loved him.

Christine Mitchell - May 21 at 04:47 PM



“ Memorial Honor Blanket was purchased for the family of Dr. Larry D. Birch.



May 21 at 04:25 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr. Larry D. Birch.

May 21 at 04:25 PM

PF

“ Dr. Birch was my doctor for many years. Kind and very straightforward.

Patty Freburg - May 18 at 04:20 PM

KD

“ Ketki, Jina and Michele from VA dialysis purchased the "Always By Your Side" Cardinal Stained Glass Memorial Wind Chime for the family of Dr. Larry D. Birch.



Ketki, Jina and Michele from VA dialysis - May 18 at 02:47 PM

RR

“ Renee Risor lit a candle in memory of Larry Birch



Renee Risor - May 16 at 06:22 PM

CB

“ He was just the best. I worked at Hyvee and he would always talk to me. He remembered my children Brian and Brittney always wanted to know what they were doing. Dr. Birch was very intelligent.

Cindy Brown - May 15 at 08:07 PM

CS

“ He was one of the best doctors. I loved how he was straightforward when you asked about a condition. Our doc until he retired. Our prayers for family and friends.

Cheryl Schaecher - May 15 at 03:20 PM

CS

“ Carol Sokol lit a candle in memory of Larry Birch



Carol Sokol - May 15 at 02:38 PM

FW

Dr. Birch was a wonderful Dr. He Said it like it was and he was right. He was a very caring Man.

Francie Walton - May 16 at 09:21 PM

AH

My Mom was always grateful for him saving her life after finding out she had a leaking heart valve. He was a wonderful doctor and one that we all wish we had now that had such knowledge and care

A H - May 21 at 12:41 PM

KM

Dr. Birch was a very caring doctor. He was very thorough and straightforward. Prayer for his family!

Kathy McFarland - May 21 at 01:54 PM

JK

Dr Birch was a wonderful physician and our family doctor until he retired. When I was 50 he found that I had a congenital hole in my heart and probably saved me from an early death. He was very kind and caring!

JoAnn Kratochvil - May 22 at 09:59 PM