



Mildred "Mardell" Brestel

January 7, 1929 - August 2, 2023

NORFOLK -- Memorial service for Mildred Mardell Brestel, 94, of Norfolk, will be held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, August 12, 2023 at the Stonacek Funeral Chapel in Norfolk. Pastor Brad Birtell will be officiating. Inurnment will follow at 1:00 pm Monday September 25 at Fort McPherson National Cemetery in Maxwell, Nebraska. Visitation will begin 1 hour prior to the service also at Stonacek Funeral Chapel. The service will be live-streamed on the Stonacek Funeral Chapel website at <https://www.stonacekfuneralchapel.com/obituaries/Mildred-Mardell-Brestel/#!/PhotosVideos>. Mardell passed away on Wednesday, August 2, 2023 at the Heritage of Bel Air Nursing Home in Norfolk. Stonacek Funeral Chapel is in charge of the arrangements.

Mardell (as she liked to be called) was the second child born on January 7, 1929, to Paul E. and Thurza A. (Almquist) Exstrom in Brady, NE. In 1932, the family moved to Lincoln, NE, followed by moves to North Platte, NE, in 1935, and Maxwell, NE, in 1946, where Paul E. Exstrom held positions as a teacher and as a school administrator and Superintendent. The family grew to include four children - three boys, Paul, Donald, and Ralph, and one daughter, Mardell.

Mardell graduated from North Platte High School in 1946. In high school, she was a member of National Honor Society. During her senior year, and for several years after, she worked as a switchboard operator for the telephone

company.

On September 26, 1948, she married her childhood friend, Leyon Oliver Brestel, at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Platte. She and Leyon moved to the Martin Brestel family Hereford cattle ranch north of Brady shortly after they married. Their first house didn't have electricity or indoor plumbing for the first year! They moved to a farm, purchased by the family business which was south of Brady, several years later. While on the farm, son Roger was born in 1951, followed by another son, Ronald, in 1956. The farm was inherited by Leyon in the 1970s, and he and Mardell considered it their home base, even as they moved around the country. With advancing age, care and upkeep of the farm caused them to sell in 2001.

In 1958, Leyon developed health problems that caused him to need to leave life on the farm. He took a job with a power plant near Lexington, NE. The family moved into an eight-foot wide trailer house, as there was a housing shortage in Lexington at that time. When the family was finally able to buy a little house in town, within a few months, Leyon was offered a position at Sheldon Station near Hallam, NE, requiring the family to move to Crete, NE, and once more, Mardell settled her family into a new community. Nine years later, the family moved to Peru, NE, so that Leyon could take a new position with Cooper Nuclear Station near Brownsville, NE. Seven years after that, Leyon and Mardell moved to Montrose, CO, where Leyon became the director of water treatment for all of the Colorado Ute Electric Association.

With each move, Mardell jumped right in to her new community. She worked in the business office at Doane College in Crete, along with raising their boys. She volunteered at the Good Samaritan nursing facility in Auburn, NE, participated in PEO (now a 50-year member) and Tuesday Club (a book club) in Peru, and volunteered for school functions. Mardell and Leyon attended all of son Ron's football and basketball games, and rarely missed a band competition or concert. She had never been able to take college classes, so

while living near Peru State College, she was able to take the plunge and became a part-time student. She never finished that degree, but she enjoyed the challenge of the learning environment.

In Montrose, she and Leyon found new adventures. They loved exploring the Colorado Rockies. They enjoyed showing others the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, snow skiing at Telluride, Crested Butte, and Keystone, cross country skiing on the Grand Mesa, and soaking in the natural hot springs of Ouray. They delighted in bus trips with friends to see the Colorado Rockies baseball team and Broadway musicals in Denver. They purchased a Cessna 182 airplane, which Leyon flew regularly. Although Mardell never showed interest to get her pilot's license, she was always willing to ride along to see family and friends. They were members of a monthly card club, which always included good food and plenty of conversation. Leyon and Mardell were very active in the United Methodist Church of Montrose. They gardened in the backyard, and grew some of the sweetest carrots around! They volunteered at the Senior Center, and helped out regularly at the Olathe Sweet Corn Festival. Mardell took up bowling while in Montrose and joined a weekly women's bowling league. With her natural competitive nature, she turned out to be a very good bowler, and started bringing home trophies for 270+ point games. It is not clear if she ever bowled a 300 point (perfect) game, but she came very close!

In 2002, Leyon and Mardell were missing their beloved Nebraska roots. They moved back to Norfolk, NE, and began the last chapter of their married lives. Together, with the assistance of their son Roger, they built and operated Typhoon Car Wash in Columbus, NE, for nearly 20 years. Although Leyon was more active in the operation, Mardell was always right there with advice and kept an interest in the finances of the business.

Her family was her most important focus. She had a very close relationship with her three brothers, their wives, and their children. The four siblings gathered together as often as they could and truly enjoyed each others company. Brother Paul and wife Bernice traveled regularly with Leyon and Mardell. They visited Sweden to learn more about their Exstrom family roots, took a paddle boat cruise on the Mississippi, and another cruise on the Columbia River in Oregon. When all the siblings got together, card games were a family-favorite activity. It didn't matter if it was Nasty Neighbors, Crazy 8's, or Court Whist; card games included boisterous laughter and friendly competition.

Mardell was always interested in her sons' lives and careers. She was equally interested in her grandchildren's activities, and looked forward to visits, frequent pictures, and videos of her great grandchildren.

In 2014, Leyon's health rapidly declined, and he passed away in March, 2015. Her 66-year loving partnership came to an end with his death. Mardell continued to keep herself busy, but with her own health challenges, she moved to The Meadows Senior Community, then to Homestead Assisted Living, and finally, Heritage of Bel-Air nursing facility. She always maintained a positive spirit about life and accepted the limitations of advancing age. She passed away on Wednesday, August 2, 2023.

She is preceded in death by her parents, her husband Leyon, her brothers Paul (and wife, Bernice), Ralph (and wife, Peggy), grandson Ryan Watchorn, and great granddaughter Cessna Elyse Brestel. Left to mourn her passing is her brother Donald (Darlene) of Oregon; Sons Roger (Kathy) of Norfolk, NE, Ronald (Martha) of Marshalltown, IA; Grandchildren Patrick (Yulia) and their children Felix, Solice, and Martin of Lincoln, NE; Michael (Leslie) and their children Cameron, Nathan, and Claire, of Lincoln, NE; Rosalia Watchorn and her son Tyler of Lincoln, NE; and Kerry (Matt) McQuillan of Gretna, NE; nieces

and nephews on both the Exstrom and Brestel sides of the family.

The family asks that memorials be contributed to Animal Shelter of Northeast Nebraska (<https://www.animalshelternn.org>) or Orphan Grain Train (<https://www.ogt.org>). Condolences may be expressed to the family on-line at www.stonacekfuneralchapel.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **12.** 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Stonacek Funeral Chapel - Norfolk
1200 N.13th St.
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-7676
info@stonacekfuneralchapel.com
<https://stonacekfuneralchapel.com/>

Memorial Service

AUG **12.** 11:00 AM (CT)

Stonacek Funeral Chapel - Norfolk
1200 N.13th St.
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-7676
info@stonacekfuneralchapel.com
<https://stonacekfuneralchapel.com/>

Inurnment

SEP **25.** 1:00 PM (CT)

Fort McPherson National Cemetery
12004 South Spur 56A
Maxwell, NE 69151

Tribute Wall



“ *Stonacek Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel*



Stonacek Funeral Chapel - August 12, 2023 at 09:55 AM



“ *Mildred "Mardell" Brestel*

October 05, 2023 at 03:46 AM



“ *My sister helped me grow up. Mardell was thoughtful and generous to us.*

Donald & Darlene Exstrom gave a Memorial Gift to the Orphan Grain Train

Donald Exstrom - August 11, 2023 at 09:16 PM



“ *Brad & Joline Krause - ICS purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.*



Brad & Joline Krause - ICS - August 11, 2023 at 09:09 AM

BI

“ Brad & Joline Krause - ICS planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.

Brad & Joline Krause - ICS - August 11, 2023 at 09:09 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.



August 10, 2023 at 02:59 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.



August 10, 2023 at 02:00 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.

August 10, 2023 at 02:00 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.*



August 09, 2023 at 03:59 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.

August 09, 2023 at 03:59 PM



“ *Ron and Martha, I am sorry to read of your mother's passing. RIP 🙏*

David Thomas - August 09, 2023 at 08:23 AM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.*



August 08, 2023 at 03:37 PM

SC

“ Our condolences to the Brestel family, and especially Ron and Martha, dear friends from high school days. Mardell was always a great host when our group got together at their acreage near Peru. I remember the hot chocolate after we'd goof around on the pond when it was frozen over in the winter. Thinking of all of you at this time and praying that you are all comforted by many great memories.
Steve & Mary Jo Chatelain

Steve Chatelain - August 08, 2023 at 09:22 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mildred "Mardell" Brestel.



August 07, 2023 at 03:34 PM