



Charles (Shorty) McDonald

April 9, 1924 - March 26, 2014

Charles (Shorty) McDonald, 89 of Grand Island died Wednesday, March 26th at Tiffany Square Center.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 1, 2014 at Blessed Sacrament Church, with Father Todd Philipsen officiating. Burial will be at Westlawn Memorial Park Cemetery.

Visitation will be 4 – 7 p.m. Monday at All Faiths Funeral Home with a Prayer Vigil at 7 p.m.

Charles was born April 9, 1924 at home on a farm northeast of Rockville, NE as the second eldest, the first son, of seven children to Richard and Rose McDonald. His family farmed the hills which were prone to drought, even before the depression and drought of the 30's. Hard times and crop failures required that the family move frequently from one rented farm to another.

Their "School bus", when they were lucky, was a truck covered with a tarp. Otherwise they had to walk several miles, "uphill both ways". As a young boy he tilled the soil behind horse drawn plow and in the fall he hand-shucked corn. His family moved out of the hills when he was in high school to a farm near Wood River. In high school he played basketball, acquired the nickname "Shorty" and graduated in 1941.

He then was employed at the Grand Island Ordinance Plant for a short time. In 1947 he married Betty J. Rohrich. He began to farm, first as a renter and then with the mentoring of successful farmers, agri-businessmen, bankers and others, he and Betty bought their first farm in Hamilton County. He incorporated new farming methods and was known for his love of John Deere implements, a far cry from the horse drawn plow.

In the mid 60's he helped promote the consolidation of the Phillips School into the Aurora School System. As a resident of Grand Island he engaged himself in supporting mayoral candidates'.

Hobbies were many and varied and added greatly to his enjoyment of life. He supported his children's interest in horses. When the youth of the area needed a place to play baseball, he built a field for them at their home. Racing was in his blood so he dabbled in racing quarter horses and thoroughbreds. As a retiree, he volunteered to read with children in the Grand Island School System. Vacations included trips to Hawaii, New

Zealand and Australia. He and Betty, with other family, extensively toured the states in their motorhome. Charles and his wife Betty loved to dance polkas at the Platte Deutsche every Saturday night. In the early 1990's he retired from farming to their home in Grand Island and to his lovely pasture on the Platte River. It was a haven for hunting and fishing and water sports. Many family and friends enjoyed the beauty of his beloved pasture. A feature at the pasture is a wooden one room school house he was in the process of restoring. Following his retirement, he went back to his love of horses with draft horses and restoring two cylinder John Deere Tractors. He and his big red Dodge pickup could be seen every day at the Burger King on Highway 30 or at Pam's. He was a member of the Rotary Club International, the Eagle's Club, the Saddle Club and St. Mary's Cathedral. He was also a member of Big Brothers Big Sisters, serving as a court appointed guardian. Shorty loved to help others, especially the less fortunate.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty, his parents, Richard and Rose McDonald and sister, Patricia Cannizzaro.

He is survived by two sons, Donald and LuAnne McDonald of Grand Island, Randall and Teresa McDonald of Phillips, and two daughters, Dianne and Bob Jones of Ardmore, OK and Rosemary and Joe Johns of Phillips. He is also survived by six grandchildren, Brett and Melissa McDonald, Cortney and Travis Casteel, Tara McDonald and Fiancé, Jeff Bacon, Tyler McDonald, Troy McDonald and Garret Johns; four great-grandchildren, Ella McDonald, Macy McDonald, Evan McDonald and Blake Casteel. He is also survived by his siblings; two sisters and three brothers, Joan Muhvic of Phillips, Barbara and Jay Lutey of Omaha, Richard and Annette McDonald of Camp Verde, AZ, Francis and Pat McDonald of Phillips and Joseph and Nancy McDonald of Tulsa, OK.

In lieu of flowers memorials are suggested to either Alzheimer's Foundation or to the Shorty McDonald Scholarship Fund.

Cemetery Details

Westlawn Memorial Park

Grand Island, NE

Tribute Wall



“ *Charles (Shorty) McDonald*

October 08, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ *Mark E Riesen purchased the Bright and Beautiful Spray for the family of Charles (Shorty) McDonald.*



Mark E Riesen - March 28, 2014 at 03:55 PM



“ *Our hearts and are with you all!! His big smile will be missed!! His passion for helping others and treating everyone fairly & with compassion has affected so many and his legacy & values handed down to his family !! Lew & Sunny Welch. and Mike & Vicki Palu*

Vicki & Mike Palu. Lew & Sunny Welch - March 27, 2014 at 04:27 PM



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Vicki & Mike Palu. Lew & Sunny Welch - March 27, 2014 at 04:27 PM