



Donald Ziola

October 26, 1939 - October 16, 2024

Donald Ziola, born October 26, 1939, died at home in the afternoon of October 16, 2024.

Don was the son of Sylvester and Emma Ziola, with 5 siblings, 4 sisters and 1 brother. He is survived by two of his sisters, including Eva Merritt of Ponder, Texas.

Don grew up on a farm, and was known for always having some animal in his arms – a cat or chicken usually. As he grew older, he was placed in the Beatrice State Home, where he received his education. In the late 70's, Don was one of the first people transitioned out of the Beatrice State Home into community integration programs, working with Mid-Nebraska Individual Services.

Don loved to work and be out in the community. He would always ask people at various locations if they were working hard and tell them they were doing a good job. He always wanted to be a productive worker, whether it was at the Grand Island Cemetery, washing dishes at local restaurants or even running his own parking lot cleaning service for local fast food places.

Don traveled to many places with various groups on tours, including Hawaii, Niagara Falls, Devil's Tower, Texas (to see family members), The Henry Doorly Zoo, Memorial Stadium, where he got to stand on the actual field, and Las Vegas, among others. Anyone who was on any of those trips ended up with Don stories of his adventures in those locations.

He was a founding member of the Wednesday Group, a group of

developmentally disabled folks who did various charitable projects around Grand Island for many years. He participated in Special Olympics, primarily bowling. He was always happy to be on various floats in the yearly Harvest of Harmony parade, waving to people and saying hello to anyone he saw. He went to the Grand Generation Center for day services for many years, and always said they had good coffee there, boy.

Don lived with Jim and Amy Kosmicki, and their family, since 2000, and was recognized in the neighborhood as the “old man who sits on the porch and waves at you.” He made friends with all the neighborhood squirrels and cats, as well as the postal carriers, UPS drivers, etc. who would come to the porch on a regular basis.

He will be missed by many.

Previous Events

Graveside Service

OCT **25**. 2:00 PM (CT)

Grand Island Cemetery
3168 W Stolley Park Rd
Grand Island, NE 68801-7203