



## Gene Armstrong

December 20, 1935 - August 9, 2021

Gene Armstrong, 85, of Grand Island, passed away to his heavenly home on Monday, August 9th, 2021 at Grand Island Regional Medical Center.

A celebration of life service will be at 1:00 pm Friday, August 20th at First Presbyterian Church, 2103 West Anna St, Grand Island, NE. Reverend Kevin Geurink will officiate. Live streaming of the service will be available on Facebook at gipresby. Immediately following the ceremony, a reception will be held in the church back yard.

Gene was born December 20th, 1935 in Broken Bow, NE, the son of Clifford and Naomi (Hudson) Armstrong. He graduated from Broken Bow High School in 1954, and attended Kearney State College, graduating in 1958 with a degree in Education. While at Kearney State, Gene earned 12 athletic letters while competing in 3 different sports.

On December 19, 1959 Gene was united in marriage to Bess Olsen of Minden. After graduation, Gene taught and coached for a total of 20 years in Minden, Omaha at Westside, and Council Bluffs, IA at Abraham Lincoln. Along the way he earned his MA from Colorado State College at Greeley, and his Administrative Specialist degree from UNK. Gene began his educational administrative career for the Grand Island Public Schools in 1977 working 16 years before closing this phase of his career as principal at Lincoln East High School.

Most would have retired at this point, but Gene went on to earn his PhD in Educational Leadership at the University of NE at Lincoln, and spent 10 years

teaching, consulting, and mentoring young educators in UNL's College of Education and Human Sciences where he received several outstanding educator awards.

Education was not just a job, but a passion, leading Gene after retirement to continue working with young adults, leading, mentoring, consulting, and teaching in ways that have had lasting impacts on many people he encountered. He had a beautiful heart for Christ and led by example. He would never shy away from being that 80 year old teacher in a young adult class environment in his church. He was often heard saying "These kids float my boat".

Gene will be remembered for being very active, enjoying many activities such as biking, golfing, running, boating, singing, and reading. His active lifestyle trickled down to his children and grandchildren. He enjoyed attending activities and cheering on all of his grandchildren. One of his favorite destinations was Colorado where family and friends joined him in hiking, biking, and snow skiing.

Gene will also be remembered for his love of music including singing in church choirs, small groups, solos for weddings and funerals, whistling his own harmonized duet, and playing the piano and ukulele.

Golf provided Gene a fun, and attainable goal to help him continue to work hard in rehab after an impactful back injury. His positive attitude and strong will during his many physical setbacks was a testament to his "never quit" attitude. He was admired by many for the way he lived life, always leading by example.

Those left to cherish his memory include his wife Bess, with whom he celebrated 61 years of marriage; son Mark (Lori) Armstrong of Lincoln, daughters Carol (Frank) Barber of Phoenix, AZ, Molly (Patrick) Abendroth of Omaha, and Cindy (John) Wemhoff of Grand Island.

Grandchildren include Brett (Mallory) Armstrong of Lincoln; AJ (Emily) Armstrong of Grand Island; Isaac (Taylor) Armstrong of Lincoln; Haley (Steph) Carre' of New York City, Leah (Lane) Hovey of Whitefish, Montana; Janie

Barber of New York City; Jonathan, Natalie, Alexandra, Josiah, Owen Abendroth all of Omaha; Jack, Kaitlyn, Addison Wemhoff, all of Grand Island; one great granddaughter Noelle Armstrong of Lincoln; and brother Rodney (Michelle) Armstrong of Lincoln.

He was preceded in death by his parents Clifford and Naomi Armstrong and his parents-in-law Melvin and Sara Maren Olsen. He is also survived by a host of close relatives whom he claimed as his own. He is also survived by his favorite golf partner and Aunt Margaret Christensen, 100, of Minden, NE.

Gene was a member and Elder of several Presbyterian Churches where he lived, member of Grand Island Noon Rotary, United Way Chair, and served each community in a variety of civic leadership roles. Gene was inducted into the Kearney State Athletic Hall of Fame in 1984, and was a charter member of the Broken Bow Athletic Hall of Fame.

Memorials are suggested to the family to go towards a church mission outreach to be determined.

Burial will be at a later date at the Minden cemetery. All Faiths Funeral Home is entrusted with the arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

**Minden Cemetery**

# Previous Events

## **Celebration of Life Service**

AUG **20**. 1:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church  
2103 W Anna St  
Grand Island, NE 68803

# Tribute Wall



“ *Gene Armstrong*

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October 08, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ *My favorite coach.*

*Elwood Johnson*  
*Minden Whippet class of '66*

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**Elwood Johnson** - August 20, 2021 at 08:50 AM



“ *Gene was one of my favorite teachers, our high school basketball coach, and a wonderful singer. He sang at my wedding while his mother-in-law played the organ at the Westminster United Presbyterian Church in Minden. Special memories. Bess, too, is a very special person...a wonderful couple.*

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**Judith Kimball** - August 13, 2021 at 03:59 PM