



Janelle Rogene Stelk

February 2, 1954 - January 14, 2026

Janelle Rogene Ackerman Stelk, 71, passed away Wednesday, January 14, 2026, in her childhood home near Phillips, surrounded by family and friends, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

Janelle was born February 2, 1954, in Aurora to Karl and Elenora (Griess) Ackerman as the youngest of five children.

She attended school in Phillips through fifth grade, Doniphan through tenth grade, and finished her school career in Aurora, graduating with the Class of 1972.

When not in school, Janelle could be found on a horse. When she was only four years old, her dad brought home a two-year-old, pony-sized Quarter Horse named Diamond, “so they could grow up together.” Insisting that she saddle the pony herself, a pulley was installed so she could raise the saddle and walk her pony under it. She joined the 4-H club to learn to care for horses, and later actively showed. She started breaking horses for hire while in the sixth grade and continued through high school.

In 1972, Janelle married Roderick (Rod) DeMaranville of Aurora, after his service in Vietnam. To that union their son, Traver DeMaranville, was born. Although later divorced, Janelle and her family remained good friends with Rod until his death in 2017.

On August 31, 1984 Janelle married Dennis Stelk of Grand Island and together they built a life at her original childhood home, which she named Hilltop Mini Ranch.

Janelle always worked in agriculture. She started her first job at Stauffer Hybrids working in corn research, then transferred to NC+ working in sorghum research for 20 years. Janelle then worked for Aurora Co-op for 13 years until her retirement four years ago.

Janelle continued her love for horses throughout her entire life. She was the 4-H leader of the Pony Express Riders for over 30 years. She taught kids how to take care of horses and coached them to be better riders.

She started Transitions Vaulting Team where riders perform gymnastics on a moving horse.

Janelle was most proud to see all her young riders grow into “good humans” and was thrilled if they continued their interest in horses as adults.

Janelle and Dennis established Nebraska Equine Assisted Therapy (NEAT) and provided horses for riding sessions for children and adults with special needs for 15 years. They were proud to see some of the riders compete in local Special Olympic competitions.

In selecting horses, Janelle focused on the colorful Appaloosa breed starting in the 1970's. She raised and trained horses throughout her adult life and loved to show versatility by riding in every type of equestrian activity.

Janelle and Dennis traveled to shows in Nebraska, South Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. She rode with the Pony Express Re-ride across Nebraska and also enjoyed trail riding and overnight camping in Nebraska,

Kansas, and Wyoming.

In 2007, Janelle was awarded the Horse Person of the Year by the Nebraska Horse Council.

Janelle was asked to represent the Appaloosa breed at demonstrations at the CHI Health Center Omaha in 2017 and 2023 during the International Dressage World Cup Finals.

On her beloved horse, Dot (These Spots are Hot), they competed in Western Dressage Association of America competitions. In their first year, they were champion at First and Second Level, and the following year won High Score Third Level Musical Freestyle and earned the Register of Excellence for lifetime cumulative points.

Janelle convinced many of her retired friends to get back into riding, calling them the "Late to Bloom Cowgirls."

Janelle helped organize horse shows, most recently the Gettin' Ranchy shows, which are currently very popular. She was always coming up with ideas to get people involved in showing horses.

In 2025, the Nebraska State Fair honored Janelle with the Ronnie Miller Ambassador of Agriculture Award, thanking her for promoting equine events at the Nebraska State Fair.

Janelle's house is filled with ribbons, trophies, and champion belt buckles, but friendships she developed and special times with family meant the most to her.

Janelle is survived by her husband Dennis Stelk of Phillips; her son, Traver

DeMaranville (Beth Wood) of Doniphan; her sister, Karen (Duane) Gruener of Phillips; her sister-in-law, Darlene Ackerman of Hastings; her step-daughters, Bobbi Jo (Darren) Parlin of Wood River, and Jennifer (Chad) Fischer of Grand Island; her grandchildren, Haley Jo Parlin Mazour (Jimmy) of Lawrence, Abby Parlin of Wood River, Faith Parlin of Fairmont, Lucas Fischer of Lincoln, and Landon Fischer of Lincoln; her great-grandson Sullivan Mazour of Lawrence; her nieces, nephew, cousins, and many dear friends.

Janelle was preceded in death by her parents; infant sister Colleen Ann Ackerman; brother Arlen Dean Ackerman; and brother Allan "Butch" Karl Ackerman, sister-in-law Joann Ackerman; and nephew Michael Eugene Gruener.

All Faiths Funeral Home will host visitation on Thursday January 22, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and a Celebration of Life on Friday, January 23, at 10:00 a.m., with service live-streamed on their website. To celebrate Janelle, wearing purple, her favorite color, is appreciated. A reception will follow at Phillips Community Hall. Burial will be held in the spring on April 24th at 2 p.m. at the Phillips Cemetery.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN **22.** 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

All Faiths Funeral Home
2929 S Locust St
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 398-2929
allfaiths@giallfaiths.com
<https://www.giallfaiths.com/>

Memorial Service

JAN **23.** 10:00 AM (CT)

All Faiths Funeral Home
2929 S Locust St
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 398-2929
allfaiths@giallfaiths.com
<https://www.giallfaiths.com/>

Committal

APR **24.** 2:00 PM (CT)

Phillips Cemetery
307 US-34
Phillips, NE 68865

Tribute Wall



“ *All Faiths Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Janelle Rogene Stelk*



All Faiths Funeral Home - January 23 at 09:38 AM

MD

“ *Mary E Dailey purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.*



Mary E Dailey - January 21 at 09:04 PM

RL

“ *Rich and Kathy Lewis purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.*



Rich and Kathy Lewis - January 21 at 08:36 PM

PR

“ Pam (Volf) Steckelberg & Ashton Rakow purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



Pam (Volf) Steckelberg & Ashton Rakow - January 21 at 05:05 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden* was purchased for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



January 21 at 04:20 PM

KW

“ *Janelle was a horsewoman who readily shared her love of horses and her knowledge of them. She always had a smile and a welcoming attitude. In 2024 she had a State Fair Display of horses from approximately 34" to 72" (at the withers) for the general public to see. She followed through on training for the events she showed in, to excel, for her own personal achievement and desire. At one state fair, she gave me a buggy ride while waiting for her class. Her love of horses and sharing attitude made her the best horsey sister a person could have. Janelle will be missed. Karen Waddell*

Karen Waddell - January 21 at 03:32 PM

EC

“ Eric C. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Janelle Rogene Stelk.

Eric C. - January 20 at 08:18 PM

SS

“ Shawn and Ashley Stricker purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



Shawn and Ashley Stricker - January 20 at 03:52 PM

SS

“ Shawn and Ashley Stricker planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Janelle Rogene Stelk.

Shawn and Ashley Stricker - January 20 at 03:52 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



January 20 at 02:10 PM

CL

“ Corey and Heather Ludwig planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Janelle Rogene Stelk.

Corey and Heather Ludwig - January 20 at 02:10 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



January 20 at 11:32 AM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



January 20 at 09:11 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



January 19 at 09:10 PM

DW

“ Dave and Jan Wagner planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Janelle Rogene Stelk.

Dave and Jan Wagner - January 19 at 09:10 PM

PB

“ I met Janelle through our mutual love of horses. I was always happy to run into her at a show. She was a fierce competitor and the first to compliment others on their rides. She will be missed.

Pam Beckmann - January 19 at 08:31 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



January 19 at 07:26 PM



“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



January 19 at 05:54 PM

JS

“ Julie S. purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



Julie S. - January 19 at 05:15 PM

MB

“ MICHAEL BOARDMAN lit a candle in memory of Janelle Stelk



MICHAEL BOARDMAN - January 19 at 04:46 PM

BF

“ Bohnarts and DeMaranville family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



Bohnarts and DeMaranville family - January 19 at 04:13 PM

NA

“ Nebraska Ranch Horse Association purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Janelle Rogene Stelk.



Nebraska Ranch Horse Association - January 19 at 04:06 PM