



Michael Eugene Gruener

March 17, 1966 - November 13, 2025

Michael Eugene Gruener, 59, of Phillips, Nebraska, passed away unexpectedly at his home on November 13, 2025.

A celebration of his life will be held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, November 19, at the United Methodist Church in Doniphan, NE. Visitation will take place from 5:00 to 7:00 PM on Tuesday, November 18, at All Faiths Funeral Home, with the family present. Memorials are suggested to the family to be designated at a later date.

Mike was born on March 17, 1966, in Grand Island, NE, to Duane and Karen (Ackerman) Gruener. He grew up on the family farm near Phillips and graduated from Doniphan High School in 1984. He later earned an Agricultural Degree from Central Community College.

On April 4, 1987, Mike married the love of his life, Karen Whitaker. Together they raised two daughters. In his spare moments, Mike enjoyed tending to his garden and sharing whatever he raised—pumpkins, eggs, potatoes, and more. He loved taking fishing trips with his Dad and a winter trip at a beach in Mexico with his lovely wife. He was also a faithful Husker football fan.

A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Mike was known for his steady work ethic, honesty, and dedication to his family, his work, and his community. He spent many years as Hall County 4-H leader and served as the Hall County Sheep Superintendent. He especially loved coaching his daughters' teams and serving through the DT Booster Club.

He started his lifelong career in agriculture at NK Research, where he traveled

to Hawaii and Puerto Rico for winter nursery. After time, his job in NK Research shifted to a sales position with NK. From NK and skills and connections he had made there, he took a position with Aurora Co-op to manage seed sales for them. After successfully getting Aurora Co-op's seed business running smoothly, and gaining more knowledge of the business, he had the opportunity to use all his gained knowledge and contacts to go to work for and build Circle Seeds up. Circle was the first of many brands over the years he worked for as corporate buyouts and mergers changed the name many times, but his job never really changed. Other brands he helped support through the mergers were Kruger and Fontanelle, then Rob-See-Co. Mike stepped away from the corporate world to work independently with Wyffels Seed as a dealer, which also allowed him to utilize all his years of gained experience and contacts to continue to build Gruener Ag. Gruener Ag turned into a very successful business where Mike could help farmers be the best they could be by recommending and selling them chemicals as well as supporting them with scouting and pulling soil samples (which was the part of his job he enjoyed the most), as he was out there in the field watching the crops grow. He built many strong relationships with colleagues and customers, and those connections were an important part of his life and work. Mike is survived by his loving wife, Karen; daughters Kayla (Bob Kill) and Molly (Blake Preston); grandchildren Eli Kill, Eleanor and Kallie Preston, with another grandson on the way. He is also survived by his parents, Duane and Karen Gruener; sisters Michelle (Bill) Koch and Marcie (Aaron) Ross; his mother-in-law, Susan Whitaker; brothers-in-law Gary (Carla) Whitaker, Dan (Jeanne) Whitaker, and Roger (Renee) Whitaker; along with many nieces, nephews, extended family, and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father-in-law, Richard Whitaker; and grandparents, Henry and Carol Gruener, and Karl and Elenora Ackerman. Mike will be remembered for his kindness, generosity, and unwavering commitment to the people he loved. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **18**. 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/>

Celebration of Life Service

NOV **19**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Doniphan United Methodist Church
304 N. 4th St.
Doniphan, NE 68832-9587
(402) 845-2761

Tribute Wall



“ *My sincere sympathy to you and your family, Karen. Norma Gauthier*

Norma Gauthier - November 21, 2025 at 02:40 PM



“ *Jason Gernstein (Mac America Ag Finance) purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.*



Jason Gernstein (Mac America Ag Finance) - November 18, 2025 at 03:37 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.*



November 18, 2025 at 02:44 PM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.*



November 18, 2025 at 10:17 AM

ML

“ Mike was perhaps the smartest person I have ever known. His knowledge and wisdom of all things "ag" was amazing. His quiet humble manner added to all the reasons we love him. We have been blessed to have him in our lives. Myron Lautenschlager

Myron Lautenschlager - November 18, 2025 at 10:05 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.



November 18, 2025 at 07:29 AM

MM

“ Mike M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael Eugene Gruener.

Mike M. - November 17, 2025 at 10:47 PM

MM

“ Mike M. purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.



Mike M. - November 17, 2025 at 10:47 PM

LS

“ Love, The LeMay Staff purchased the Serene Re treat for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.



Love, The LeMay Staff - November 17, 2025 at 08:15 PM

GL

“ Karen,
Not sure if you remember Jo and I but we meet before a Husker game in the Haymarket area. I considered him a good friend and co-worker. I worked with Fontanelle and had great respect for his ideas and opinions. I enjoyed our many conversations. I will really miss his laughter.
Glenn Larson

Glenn Larson - November 17, 2025 at 05:50 PM

GK

“ Gary and Linda Kolman purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.



Gary and Linda Kolman - November 17, 2025 at 05:39 PM

RK

“ Keeping the whole family in my prayers in this time of grief. Thinking about you guys. Mike was just a nice guy; great cook; always willing to serve!
- Rev. Kelly

Rev. Kelly Karges - November 17, 2025 at 04:21 PM

KS

“ Kearney - Nutrien Ag Solutions purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.



Kearney - Nutrien Ag Solutions - November 17, 2025 at 03:06 PM

SS

“ Steve and Loretta Stelk planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael Eugene Gruener.

Steve and Loretta Stelk - November 17, 2025 at 12:42 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.



November 17, 2025 at 12:42 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael Eugene Gruener.



November 17, 2025 at 12:35 PM