



## Willa Berney

April 8, 1923 - April 17, 2019

WILLA BERNEY 96

Willa Dorline Berney, 96 of Wolbach passed away on Tuesday, April 17, 2019, at Brookfield Park in St. Paul, NE.

Services will be at 11:00 a.m. Monday in the school auditorium at Wolbach with visitation one hour before the service also in the auditorium. Reverend Glenda Pearson will officiate. Burial will follow at the Hillside Cemetery in Wolbach.

All Faiths Funeral Home of Grand Island is entrusted with the arrangements.

Willa Dorline (Grossart) Berney was born April 8, 1923, in Wolbach, NE to William Grossart Sr. and Josephine (Berney) Grossart. She was born in the home now occupied by the Rick Brown family. Willa lived all her life in Wolbach except for a few short months. She was welcomed into this world by five sisters: Evelyn (Everett) Cook, Lillian (Herbert) Wickard, Lila (Harold) Terry, Agnes (Lloyd) (Bud) Patrick, Ruby (Clarence) Bearbower and three years later, William Jr. was born. Willa and Jr. were constant companions.

She married Laurence Edward Berney on June 22, 1956, in Pocatello, Idaho. They lived in Salem, Oregon until November of 1956 when they returned to Wolbach.

Willa wanted to be a nurse but with no money to attend college, Superintendent Price talked her into taking “Normal Training” to become a teacher. “No Way!” was her reply. However, she earned a teaching certificate, but she still DID NOT want to teach. Therefore, she went to Omaha with a friend who worked at a hospital. She got a job there but was certainly the WRONG THING to do.....too big, too fast, and too many people for Willa. In two weeks, she was back in Wolbach waiting tables and working at the bakery. In January, Star School, north of town needed a teacher. She accepted the job with the coaxing of Archie Nelson, but had no idea what she was getting into. A terrible snow storm arrived just before her first day. After thinking she'd freeze to death, she arrived to her classroom with ten eager learners. A terrible snowy winter made for an adventure! She taught at Star School for two years and then at the Berney School from 1942 through May 1943. The fall of 1944 through May 1945 was spent at the Wagner School south of Wolbach. In the fall of 1954, Willa felt she was ready for the big step...TOWN! She began her teaching career in Wolbach in the same room where she attended when she was five. She taught there until 1956 when she and Laurence went to Oregon. In the fall of 1957, when they returned, she taught at the Sperling School. Then in 1958, back to Wolbach she went, never to leave again until her retirement in 1999 after teaching four generations! She went on to volunteer in classrooms and in the pre-school until October of this year. What a legacy she left!

Willa was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Wolbach and the American Legion Auxiliary. Her greatest joys were her nieces and nephews. She too cherished her many student who brought her so much joy. She also loved hosting her many Christmas open-houses.

Those left to cherish her memory include: nieces, Rita (Jerry) Lammers, Susan (Verlyn) L'Herueux, Rosanne (Dan) Christensen, Doris (Bill)Nuss, Nina

(Bill) Carlson, Marjorie (Joe) Stoffel, Beverly (Carl) Newquist; nephews, Bill (Pam) Grossart, Roger (Val) Berney, Dick (Sherry) Berney, Steve Berney, Ray (Diane) Berney, Rex (Karen) Berney . Also surviving are great nieces and nephews; Brian (Ashley) Lammers, Brad Lammers; Tracy (Kate) O'Gorman, Travis (Amy) O'Gorman Brandon (Amber) Grossart, Blake (Lexi) Grossart; Jackie (Sean) Gellatly, Amanda (Chris) Terrano, Josh Christensen, Andrea Christensen, and Katie Christensen and fiancé Brantly Chavis, and many great-great nieces and nephews along with a host of friends.

Willa was preceded in death by her husband Laurence, September 25, 1981; her parents; sisters and brothers-in-law; her brother and sister-in-law, Pauline; brothers-in-law, Frank (Hester), Austin (Lillian), Erroll (Mary) Ivan, Raymond, Tyke (Kate), William, Reid, and Carroll (Lois).

A memorial fund will be established in memory of Willa. Online condolences may be sent to [www.giallfaiths.com](http://www.giallfaiths.com)

# Cemetery Details

**Hillside Cemetery at Wolbach**

# Tribute Wall



“ *Willa Berney*

October 08, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ *An extraordinary person.....Generations of lives were touched by Mrs. Berney.....her legacy lives on.*

**Kathleen Kolar Wiechman** - April 24, 2019 at 10:34 AM



“ *Len has so many wonderful memories of Willa, both as his teacher and as a family friend. I got to visit with her last fall, and she was as great as ever. As a teacher myself, I loved the obit and how she really found her calling for many years, and she touched the lives of many children. God bless you all.*

**Judy Marco** - April 22, 2019 at 09:50 AM



“ *Mrs. Berney will be forever in our hearts. I will miss her terribly when I come back home for my visits each year. Heaven has gained a very special teacher. Sending my prayers of strength and comfort. You in my thoughts to her family*



**Julie Haller** - April 21, 2019 at 07:51 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Willa Berney.*



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April 20, 2019 at 05:11 PM



“ *I do not know her, but often times i read the obits as i was from Grand Island NE, and know some one from wolbach.NE etc. that was very interesting to read. Thanks for sharing. Myparents are in GI cemetery.....i now live in Alma KS. Blessings to each of you we too are Lutherans MCLS . Happy Easter. Isaiah 40;41 Julie Pulliam Schultz rural alma ks*

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**Julie Schultz** - April 20, 2019 at 03:04 PM



“ *Willa was a wonderful lady and a great teacher. She will always be remembered by many as she touched many lives.*

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**Leana Bergantzel Hauxwell** - April 20, 2019 at 12:17 PM

CM

“ I was the Speech, Language Pathologist at Wolbach Public Schools for several years. She was very welcoming to me, as the teacher from out of town. I actually taught students in the hall outside of her classroom. The Kindergarten students adored her. It was amazing to see how well they behaved for her, even when she would not be feeling her best. The town of Wolbach has lost a caring and loving citizen. I was sorry to read of her passing.

Carolyn Mills  
Grand Island, NE

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Carolyn Mills - April 20, 2019 at 11:18 AM

PB

“ I was able to help her at school. and of all the people she could ask she asked me to stay with her sister and take care of her. she took me in and showed me what true love was. I loved her so much

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pamela rolf blackburn - April 19, 2019 at 01:39 PM

SO

“ What an amazing lady! And lifelong friend to our family. Our prayers to your family and may you find comfort in precious memories.

Rosemary O'Connor and family

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Sheila O'Connor - April 19, 2019 at 11:29 AM

TH

“ Terrie (Anderson) Heaps lit a candle in memory of Willa Berney



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Terrie (Anderson) Heaps - April 19, 2019 at 09:05 AM

TH

“ When I was little I used to think I wanted to be a teacher just like Mrs. Berney but in reality no one could ever be like her .. now that I'm older and wiser I know that for sure. It was a privilege to call her not only my teacher and my children's teacher, she was a great friend she will be missed by many. Heaven truly has the best teacher .. Rest In Peace Mrs. Berney

Terrie (Anderson) Heaps - April 19, 2019 at 09:04 AM

TC

“ My deepest sympathy to the family of this amazing woman she taught my husband and all 3 of our daughters she also taught my 2 Nieces she was such an amazing person and my Kids love her So please except my heart felt sympathy and she also taught my Granddaughter who will Graduate on May 11 th from High school Such and amazing lady



Theresa Coplen - April 19, 2019 at 12:23 AM



“ Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Willa Berney.



April 18, 2019 at 05:40 PM