

NIELSEN, CAROL S.
May 30, 1939
Yankton, SD
December 26, 2025
Omaha, NE
The New Era
— January 1, 2025

**Carol Sunbeam
Nielsen**

86
Omaha, NE
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Beloved mother, grandmother, and friend, Carol Sunbeam Nielsen, passed away peacefully in Omaha, Nebraska early Friday morning, December 26, 2025, after her earthly struggle with Alzheimer's Disease came to an end. Her warmth and kindness made the world a better place for all who encountered her.

Carol's funeral service will be 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 31, 2025 at George Boom Funeral Home & On-Site Crematory in Sioux Falls, with burial at Spring Valley Lutheran Cemetery in Viborg, SD. Memorials in Carol's name may be made to The Alzheimer's Association or Our Savior's Lutheran Foundation.

Carol was born on May 30, 1939, in Yankton, South Dakota, to Henry and Emily Strunk. Carol grew up on her family's farm near Irene, South Dakota. It was here that she learned her Midwestern work ethic from her parents and her beloved brother, Ray. She participated in Luther League and 4H. She developed an early love of music, playing the baritone horn, the piano, and singing in various choirs. She spent happy time with two maternal aunts and uncles who doted on her. She graduated from Viborg High School and helped organize annual Danish Days class reunion activities, reconnecting with classmates and enjoying the community spirit. She attended Augustana College in Sioux Falls and graduated from Freeman Academy with a teacher's certificate in 1959.

She met her future husband, Vernon Nielsen, at a local business event. He was attending as a participant, and she was helping to serve coffee and lunch. Later that day, he called to ask for a date and my grandmother told to her "Say yes", before handing her the telephone. After marrying in June 1959, they made a home in Sioux Falls. Together, they raised two children, Laurie and Mary. Carol was a faithful member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church and shared her time and talents whenever

needed. The Couples Club group that she and Vernon joined as new members at Our Savior's, intended to be a short-term connection, was a lifelong close-knit group. Augustana engaged her in helping to sew costumes for Viking Varieties, a delight for her. A proud Rotarian for many years, she contributed as a member and board member and our home frequently hosted

Rotary exchange students. She was proud of her service through Hope Haven, funded through Rotary, serving people in Romania and Mexico to deliver wheelchairs and other mobility devices to those in need. As a 25-year resident of Trail Ridge Community, she ran the art cart program, served on the resident board, and participated in the many activities offered. Trail Ridge and the community of friends she made there were the cornerstone of her life during her retirement years.

Carol had a fun side too. She was always ready to say yes to whatever shenanigans were planned. She was an avid water volleyball player, and it was the highlight of her week. With all her activities, the family had to time phone calls to "catch her" when she wasn't on the go. She traveled often to Omaha to support her grandchildren's activities, cheering them on proudly. She was an explorer at heart and traveled in the U.S. and internationally. Carol especially enjoyed family reunions in Sweden, visiting her maternal ancestral home.

Carol is preceded in death by her husband, Vernon, her parents, and her four brothers. Surviving Carol are her daughters Laurie Neumayer (Bob), Mary McMartin (Todd), and grandsons Connor McMartin (Blair), Taylor McMartin, Hunter Neumayer, and Bryce Neumayer. The family would like to extend special thanks to staff at Trail Ridge, and more recently at FountainView Memory Support in Omaha and to the wonderful hospice staff of OnCare in Omaha.

If the world had more people like Carol Nielsen, surely it would be a kinder, gentler place. Her presence will be deeply missed, but her legacy of love, faith, and service endures.