

I Believe In Farming

I believe a man's greatest possession is his **dignity** and that no calling bestows this more abundantly than farming. I believe **hard work** and **honest sweat** are the building blocks of a person's character. I believe that farming, despite its hardships and disappointments, is the most **honest** and **honorable** way a man can spend his days on this earth. I believe in **learning values** that will last a lifetime and can be learned no other way. I believe that many of the **best things in life are indeed free**: the splendor of a sunrise, the rapture of wide-open spaces, the exhilarating site of your land greening each spring. I believe that **true happiness** comes from watching your crops ripen in the field, your children grow tall in the sun, your whole family feel the pride that springs from their **shared experience**. I believe when a man grows old and sums up his days, he should be able to **stand tall** and **feel pride** in the life he's lived. I believe in farming because it makes all this possible.



Celebrating THE LIFE OF Donald John Schmidt

BORN TO WILLIAM & ESTELLA (AVERY) SCHMIDT

MARCH 31, 1936 - TIOGA, NORTH DAKOTA

PASSED THROUGH HEAVENS GATES

MAY 23, 2025 - WATFORD CITY, NORTH DAKOTA

FUNERAL SERVICES

FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2025 AT 11:00 AM

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

WATFORD CITY, NORTH DAKOTA

-LUNCHEON TO FOLLOW SERVICES-

OFFICIATING

MINISTER MATTHEW ROLFSON

MUSICIANS

CAROLINE SCHWARTZ

SOLOIST

KATHLEEN BEARD

MUSIC

"BORNING CRY" - KATHLEEN BEARD

"THE LORDS PRAYER" - KATHLEEN BEARD

"AMAZING GRACE" - CONGREGATIONAL

"ON EAGLES WINGS" - CONGREGATIONAL

"HOW GREAT THOU ART" - CONGREGATIONAL

PALLBEARERS

CORY SCHERER

TROY BLACKFORD

PRESTON WISE

MARK SCHMIDT

ZACH SOLLUM

MICHAEL SCHAFF

USHERS

HOWDY LAWLER

STEVE SANFORD

FINAL RESTING PLACE

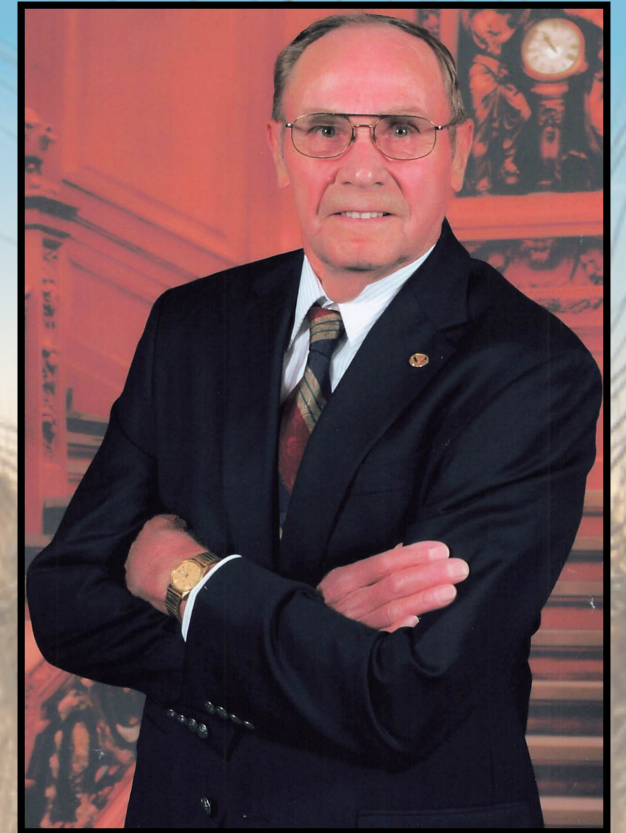
SCHAFFER CEMETERY - WATFORD CITY, ND

ARRANGEMENTS BY

FULKERSON STEVENSON FUNERAL HOME

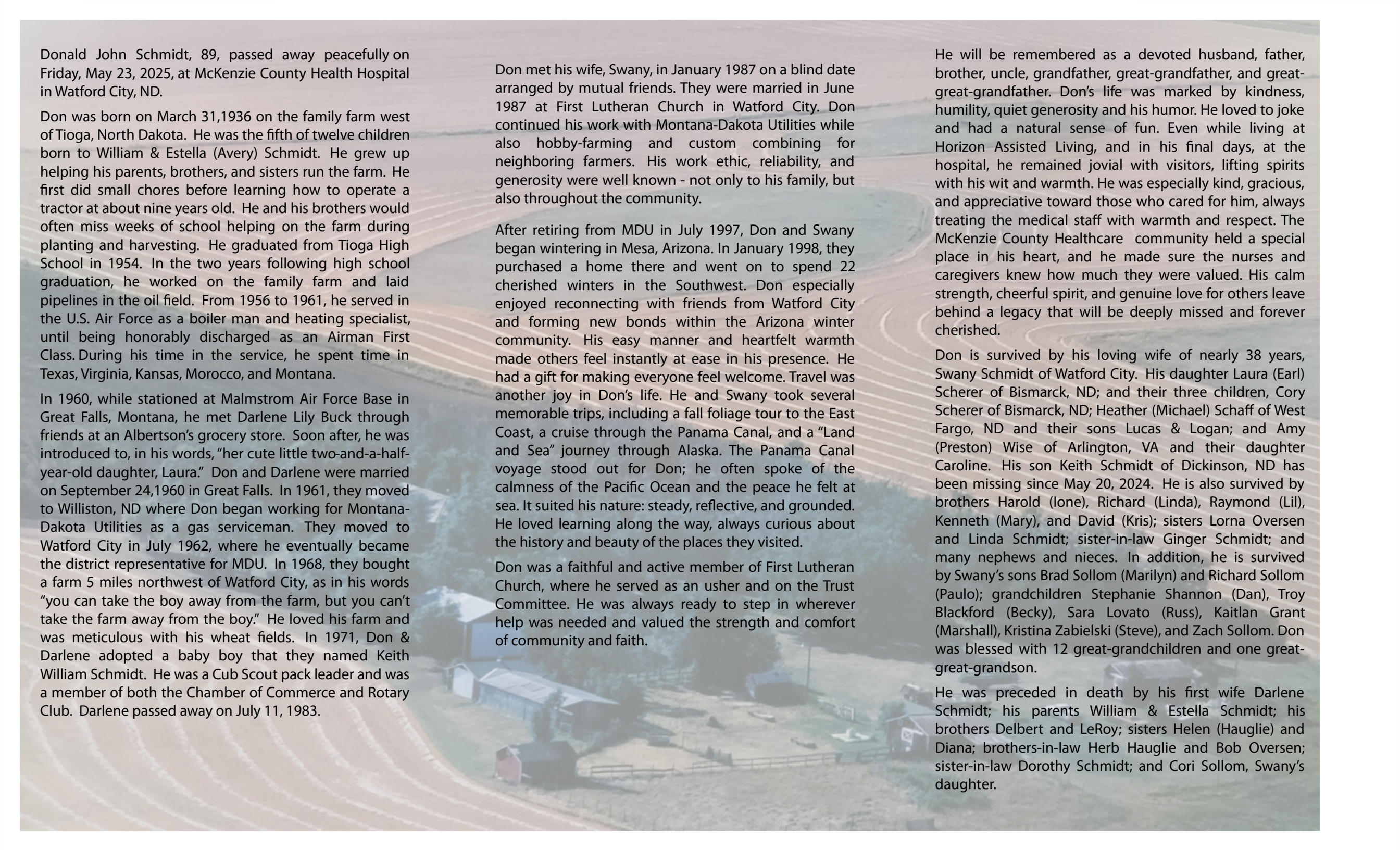
WATFORD CITY, NORTH DAKOTA

IN LOVING *Memory*



DONALD JOHN SCHMIDT

MARCH 31, 1936 - MAY 23, 2025



Donald John Schmidt, 89, passed away peacefully on Friday, May 23, 2025, at McKenzie County Health Hospital in Watford City, ND.

Don was born on March 31, 1936 on the family farm west of Tioga, North Dakota. He was the fifth of twelve children born to William & Estella (Avery) Schmidt. He grew up helping his parents, brothers, and sisters run the farm. He first did small chores before learning how to operate a tractor at about nine years old. He and his brothers would often miss weeks of school helping on the farm during planting and harvesting. He graduated from Tioga High School in 1954. In the two years following high school graduation, he worked on the family farm and laid pipelines in the oil field. From 1956 to 1961, he served in the U.S. Air Force as a boiler man and heating specialist, until being honorably discharged as an Airman First Class. During his time in the service, he spent time in Texas, Virginia, Kansas, Morocco, and Montana.

In 1960, while stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana, he met Darlene Lily Buck through friends at an Albertson's grocery store. Soon after, he was introduced to, in his words, "her cute little two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Laura." Don and Darlene were married on September 24, 1960 in Great Falls. In 1961, they moved to Williston, ND where Don began working for Montana-Dakota Utilities as a gas serviceman. They moved to Watford City in July 1962, where he eventually became the district representative for MDU. In 1968, they bought a farm 5 miles northwest of Watford City, as in his words "you can take the boy away from the farm, but you can't take the farm away from the boy." He loved his farm and was meticulous with his wheat fields. In 1971, Don & Darlene adopted a baby boy that they named Keith William Schmidt. He was a Cub Scout pack leader and was a member of both the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club. Darlene passed away on July 11, 1983.

Don met his wife, Swany, in January 1987 on a blind date arranged by mutual friends. They were married in June 1987 at First Lutheran Church in Watford City. Don continued his work with Montana-Dakota Utilities while also hobby-farming and custom combining for neighboring farmers. His work ethic, reliability, and generosity were well known - not only to his family, but also throughout the community.

After retiring from MDU in July 1997, Don and Swany began wintering in Mesa, Arizona. In January 1998, they purchased a home there and went on to spend 22 cherished winters in the Southwest. Don especially enjoyed reconnecting with friends from Watford City and forming new bonds within the Arizona winter community. His easy manner and heartfelt warmth made others feel instantly at ease in his presence. He had a gift for making everyone feel welcome. Travel was another joy in Don's life. He and Swany took several memorable trips, including a fall foliage tour to the East Coast, a cruise through the Panama Canal, and a "Land and Sea" journey through Alaska. The Panama Canal voyage stood out for Don; he often spoke of the calmness of the Pacific Ocean and the peace he felt at sea. It suited his nature: steady, reflective, and grounded. He loved learning along the way, always curious about the history and beauty of the places they visited.

Don was a faithful and active member of First Lutheran Church, where he served as an usher and on the Trust Committee. He was always ready to step in wherever help was needed and valued the strength and comfort of community and faith.

He will be remembered as a devoted husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather. Don's life was marked by kindness, humility, quiet generosity and his humor. He loved to joke and had a natural sense of fun. Even while living at Horizon Assisted Living, and in his final days, at the hospital, he remained jovial with visitors, lifting spirits with his wit and warmth. He was especially kind, gracious, and appreciative toward those who cared for him, always treating the medical staff with warmth and respect. The McKenzie County Healthcare community held a special place in his heart, and he made sure the nurses and caregivers knew how much they were valued. His calm strength, cheerful spirit, and genuine love for others leave behind a legacy that will be deeply missed and forever cherished.

Don is survived by his loving wife of nearly 38 years, Swany Schmidt of Watford City. His daughter Laura (Earl) Scherer of Bismarck, ND; and their three children, Cory Scherer of Bismarck, ND; Heather (Michael) Schaff of West Fargo, ND and their sons Lucas & Logan; and Amy (Preston) Wise of Arlington, VA and their daughter Caroline. His son Keith Schmidt of Dickinson, ND has been missing since May 20, 2024. He is also survived by brothers Harold (Ione), Richard (Linda), Raymond (Lil), Kenneth (Mary), and David (Kris); sisters Lorna Oversen and Linda Schmidt; sister-in-law Ginger Schmidt; and many nephews and nieces. In addition, he is survived by Swany's sons Brad Sollom (Marilyn) and Richard Sollom (Paulo); grandchildren Stephanie Shannon (Dan), Troy Blackford (Becky), Sara Lovato (Russ), Kaitlan Grant (Marshall), Kristina Zabielski (Steve), and Zach Sollom. Don was blessed with 12 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandson.

He was preceded in death by his first wife Darlene Schmidt; his parents William & Estella Schmidt; his brothers Delbert and LeRoy; sisters Helen (Hauglie) and Diana; brothers-in-law Herb Hauglie and Bob Oversen; sister-in-law Dorothy Schmidt; and Cori Sollom, Swany's daughter.