



Karen Kay Kardell

January 15, 1938 - February 26, 2026

Karen Kay Kardell, age 88, passed away on Feb 26, 2026.

Karen will be cremated and laid to rest in Lakeview Gardens Cemetery in Spirit Lake, Iowa later this summer in a private family service. Memorials may be made to Harbor of Joy Lutheran Church, 1204 L Avenue, Milford, Iowa 51331. Arrangements are under the direction of the Robinson Funeral Home in Spirit Lake. Online condolences may be left at www.spiritlakefuneralhome.com

Karen Kay Kauffman was born on January 15, 1938, in Carroll, Iowa, to Bill and Nettie Kauffman. She was raised in Audubon, Iowa, where she attended school and graduated from high school in 1956. On June 17, 1956, she married Ben Kardell, and together they raised four children.

Karen was devoted to her family and took great pride in caring for them. She enjoyed sewing, playing cards and Mah Jong with all her buddies, and loved singing in the church choirs at both Bethany Lutheran in Spencer, IA and Broadway Chapel at Carriage Manor in Mesa, AZ.

In 1962, Karen and Ben purchased her father's trucking business, where she served as the bookkeeper for many years. In 1973, they relocated to Spencer, Iowa, continuing their work in the trucking industry. While living in Spencer, Karen pursued her love of music by joining the Clef Club and remained actively involved at Bethany Lutheran Church.

Professionally, Karen worked for ten years at Northwest Federal Bank and later for three years as a Finance Manager at Don Pierson Ford. She and Ben

retired in 1993 and spent their winters in Mesa, Arizona at Carriage Manor Resort. Over the 32 years they wintered there, they made many long-lasting friendships. In 2003, they sold their home in Spencer and moved to Okoboji, Iowa, where they lived for part of each year. In 2008, they made Arizona their permanent residence.

Karen was preceded in death by her husband, Ben, both parents and her sisters, Dorothy Schmidt and Charlene McLaughlin.

She is survived by her four children: Benna Lea (Curt) Schnell of Omaha, NE; Bruce (Gwen) Kardell of Spencer, Iowa; Brian (Ann) Kardell of Bettendorf, Iowa; and Brent (Reiko) Kardell of Pleasant Hill, CA; grandchildren: Brady (Jenn) Schnell, Jaime (Josh) Schnell-Poore, Liz (Jake) Kluver, Bill (Katie) Kardell, Kody (Megan) Kardell, BJ (Kara) Kardell, Gabby (Shawn Barnett) Kardell, Michael (Jess Leno) Kardell, Steven (Gezelle) Kardell, Jeffrey (Katie) Kardell, Naomi Kardell and Kalena Kardell plus 18 cherished great-grandchildren.

Cemetery Details

Lakeview Garden Cemetery

2403 175th St
Okoboji, IA 51355

Tribute Wall

KS

“ I always enjoyed meeting Karen at various times when she always had a beautiful smile !

Kathy Shatto - March 25 at 02:49 PM

ES

“ I am deeply sorry for your loss. Praying for the family. Ervin/Smitty Schmidt

Ervin Schmidt - March 13 at 12:23 PM

RM

“ Prayers and Hugs for you Benny and your family. So sorry for your loss. Karen will be missed by many.



Reba Munson - March 04 at 08:21 AM

Wife

“ We enjoyed having Karen as a neighbor in Carriage Manor. Prays for the family.
Rick and Becky Fischer

Rebecca Fischer - March 03 at 05:12 PM

CP

“ Karen was a sweet lady. Benny and her had great fun both at lakes and Arizona for many years. She always had a smile. She will be greatly missed.



Carol Parks - March 02 at 06:24 PM

BS

“ I am so deeply sorry for your loss. While I didn't have the privilege of meeting your mother, it's clear through you how special she must have been. Wishing you and your family comfort, strength, and peace during this difficult time.

Brian Shreeves - March 02 at 12:23 PM

MK

“ Our prayers and sympathy to Karen's family. So many good memories of the Kardell family. We visited a few times in Mesa and happened to be there for Ben's funeral. Karen will be missed.
Merlyn and Jeanette Knudsen

Merlyn and Jeanette Knudsen - March 01 at 06:03 PM

CC

“ So sorry for your loss. Keeping you in our prayers. Dean & Colleen Conrad

Colleen Conrad - March 01 at 08:51 AM

LH

“ *Peace and prayers to you.*



Laura Hanna - February 27 at 07:24 PM



“ *Karen was simply one of my most favorite people for the love she gave me. I will always smile when I think of her. ❤️ Kevin Kardell*

Kevin Kardell - February 27 at 07:19 PM



“ *My husband and I went to a few Nascar races with both Ben and Karen, it was so much fun, they would take there motorhome and park it and we could park by them so not have to walk so far. It was great times we had with them, and also they were my parents very good friends Leo and Yvonne Laurin, my husband Steve has also passed from a stroke, they can all party again together. I will miss you Karen.. Love ❤️☐Cyndie*

Cyndie Laurin Dippold - February 27 at 07:09 PM