



Irene M. Becwar-Hartman

November 6, 1935 - May 27, 2026

A Funeral Service for Irene will be held on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the United Methodist Church in Milligan, Nebraska, with Lay Pastor Michelle Lessard presiding.

Visitation will be held on Monday, June 8, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with family present from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Farmer & Son Funeral Home - Kotas Chapel in Milligan, Nebraska.

Graveside Services will be held following the funeral service at the Bohemian National Cemetery in Milligan, Nebraska.

Memorials are to be directed to the family to be designated at a later date.

Services will be live-streamed. They will start 5 minutes before the start of the service. <https://youtube.com/@farmersonfuneralhome?si=S1n2FKDwIWG6XWLC>

Irene (Kotas) Becwar-Hartman was born to Joe and Julia (Brejcha) Kotas on November 6, 1935, near the town of Western, NE, and passed away at Country House Memory Care in Millard, NE, on May 27, 2026, at the age of 90 Years, 6 months, and 21 days.

Irene was one of 4 children, and had 2 older brothers, Lumir and Joie, and a younger sister, Edna. Her parents moved from a rural farm near Western, NE, to a farm near Friend, NE, where she grew up. During her elementary and junior high years, Irene helped on the farm, and attended Country Schools—District 120, and Rural District 57 in Saline County. She attended Wilber, Nebraska High School and graduated in 1953. To avoid the long daily commute from the family farm, Irene stayed during the week with her Aunt Mary, who had a house next to the Wilber Hotel.

While attending school, Irene worked part-time at Holloways Café in Wilber and as a clerk at Auctions, and later earned her Teaching Certificate from Doane College in Crete, NE. Irene returned to teach K-8 grades at the same rural school she had attended, including now teaching her younger sister Edna, who was in the 8th Grade.

In high school, Irene met Leroy Becwar from Milligan, Nebraska at a dance at the Saline Center. Their love grew through daily letters to each other while Leroy served in the Army for 2 years during the Korean War. When Leroy got out of the Service, they were married on December 9, 1954, at the United Methodist Church in Milligan, NE.

The newlyweds made their home in Omaha, NE, while Leroy attended Electronic School and worked at a Gas Station during the evening. Irene was employed doing clerical work at Northwestern Bell Telephone Company, and would walk 21 blocks to and from work each day from their small Omaha apartment.

After Leroy received his Degree, the couple moved to Davenport, Nebraska, in August 1955, and established “Leroy’s TV & Radio.” They purchased the oldest building in Davenport, and one of only a few buildings that had not burned down in the early Davenport 1903 and 1907 fires. This building had been the “Livings Meat Market,” and before that, housed one of Davenport’s

two banks in 1872, the same year Davenport officially became a Nebraska Town. Leroy and Irene transformed that historic building into their television and radio business, and then remodeled and made a home in another building behind their store.

As the business grew, Leroy wired a bell and intercom system between the store and the house.

Customers often smiled as they watched Irene hurry back and forth between the two buildings when the bell would ring, and while Leroy was away on service calls. In 1968, the couple expanded the business by purchasing the former Sickles Hardware building next to their TV Store, and connected the two buildings together.

Leroy and Irene were blessed with four children, 3 girls and 1 boy: Joyce, Gayle, Janene, and Janis. While helping operate the family business, Irene also played an important role as Leroy's assistant in her husband's semiprofessional magic career. After attending a magic convention and seeing another magician include his kids in his magic show, Irene convinced Leroy to add their kids in their show, and their performances became a family act through the Midwest, as "Leroy the Great & the Incredible Irene, with the Magical Becwar's." All 4 children can still do magic tricks and shows, with son Gayle still performing magic and comedy professionally across the country.

Family was always Irene's greatest priority, and she was actively involved in her children's activities. She served on Y-Teens Mother Council, Girl Scout Council & Cookie Chairman, Band Mothers, Thayer County 4-H Council, as a 4-H Club Leader for many years, and on numerous school events. She and Leroy never missed a game, concert, play, speech, or activity involving their children. Irene took pride in making sure uniforms were cleaned and ironed, costumes were sewn correctly, and every detail was taken care of. She often

joked that she lost her hearing because Leroy yelled “FOUL” at the referee so loudly at every basketball game!

A woman of strong faith, Irene was baptized at the United Methodist Church and remained active in Church life throughout the years. She taught Bible School, assisted with Sunday School, served on church boards and committees, participated in United Methodist Women, and later became active at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Hastings, NE.

Irene was also active in many community organizations, including the Home Extension Club, American Legion Auxiliary, WFLA Lodge #389, election board service, and the Fraternal Order of Eagles. She volunteered her time and talents wherever she was needed.

Her hobbies included sewing, embroidery, crafts, art, drawing, reading, and dancing. Irene started dancing at Saline Center when she was only 4 years old, and even taught dancing lessons at one time. Her son Gayle recalled going to Saline Center as a little kid, and wanting to slide on the slick floor with the other boys during the band breaks, only to have his Mom (Irene) teach him the waltz, polka, and other dances. Leroy and Irene loved traveling with friends to many dances.

After Leroy passed away in January 1999, Irene met Lavern “Vern” Hartman at a Good Samaritan Dance in Hastings, NE in 2002. They became dance partners, and then married partners when she married “Vern” on April 11, 2003, at the St Paul Lutheran Church in Hastings, NE, and then became a member of that church. She moved to Hastings, and they made their home at the Good Samaritan Society Village Apartments, where they enjoyed dancing, golfing, playing cards, delivering “Meals on Wheels,” and many other activities. They moved to Irene’s house in Davenport in November 2007, and became members of the Christ Lutheran Church there until Vern passed away

on April 19, 2011. Irene lived in Davenport, NE, for three more years, until November 2014, when she moved to Lincoln Sunrise Apartments to be closer to her kids. She lived in Lincoln for 7 years and then moved to Omaha.

Irene was preceded in death by her parents Joe and Julia Kotas; parents-in-law Mike and Mollie Becwar; husbands Leroy Becwar and Lavern Hartman; brothers Lumir and Joie Kotas; brother-in-law Leonard Becwar and Frank Musil; sister-in-law Delores Becwar and Dorothy Kotas; nephew Russell and Gary Kotas, and Kenny Becwar and wife Sandy; nieces Ellen Joyce Kotas, Gail Kotas, and Dawn Becwar; step-son Tim Hartman, and nephew-in-law Jim Mckeon.

Irene is survived by sister Edna Musil of Florence, AZ; sister-in-Law Joan Kotas of Wilber, NE; daughter Joyce and husband Jeff Chleboun of Missouri Valley, IA; son Gayle and wife Cindy Becwar of Lincoln, NE; daughter Janene and husband Mark Harris of Lincoln, NE; daughter Janis and husband West Pierce of Omaha NE; son-in-law Mike and Jeff Hartman of Phoenix, AZ; Grand Children Jenni and Husband Matt Soukup of Omaha, NE; Emmy Lou and Husband Phil Lucia of Plano, Texas; Amy and Husband Kyle Schulte of Omaha, NE; Eric Harris of Lincoln, NE; Christa and Nigteagle Taylor of Omaha, NE; Irelyn Pierce and Aaron Wert of Omaha, NE; Presley Becwar of Los Angeles, CA; Payton Becwar of Omaha, NE; and Aaron Pierce of Omaha, NE; Also, all the Hartman Step-Grand Children: Matt, Ryan, Sarah, Leah, Chris, Ben, Emily, Brittany, and Sidney, and all their families too.

Irene is also survived by 8 great-grandchildren, Charlotte, Savannah, Adam, Boston, Greyson, Luke, Sophie, and Carolyn.

Irene was a devoted mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother whose kindness, faith, work ethic, and love for family touched countless lives. Her legacy lives on through the generations she cherished so deeply, and she will

be greatly missed by her family, cousins, relatives, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Cemetery Details

Bohemian National Cemetery

Milligan, NE 68406

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 8. 1:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Farmer & Son Funeral Home-Kotas Chapel
Main Street
Milligan, NE 68406
(402) 759-3617
<https://farmerandsonfuneralhome.com>

Family Present for Visitation

JUN 8. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

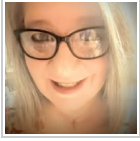
Farmer & Son Funeral Home-Kotas Chapel
Main Street
Milligan, NE 68406
(402) 759-3617
<https://farmerandsonfuneralhome.com>

Funeral Service

JUN 9. 2:00 PM (CT)

Milligan United Methodist Church
580 N Street
Milligan, NE 68406

Tribute Wall



“ *Janine Uldrich lit a candle in memory of Irene Becwar-Hartman*



Janine Uldrich - June 11 at 10:12 AM



“ *24 files added to the album Flower Arrangements*



Farmer & Son Funeral Home - June 09 at 05:40 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Irene M. Becwar-Hartman.*



June 06 at 09:46 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Irene M. Becwar-Hartman.

June 06 at 09:46 AM



“ I remember Saline Center dance floor as well and family get togethers and the Magic tricks as a child they would always have time to entertain kids.

Rodney Brejcha - May 31 at 10:37 AM



Thank you Rodney for the memory. Saline Center was always a fun place to be. Dad, and all of us always enjoy doing "magic tricks" to anyone...

Gayle L Becwar - June 03 at 06:07 PM



She was a beautiful woman. Even though her sight was failing and her hearing almost gone, she loved life and her family and friends.

Judy Green - June 09 at 01:04 PM