



Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek

September 10, 1947 - November 17, 2025

A Memorial Service for Karen will be held on Sunday, November 30, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at the Saline Center Auditorium in Western, Nebraska, with Justin Pekarek presiding.

No visitation will be held as it was Karen's wishes to be cremated.

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

Inurnment of Ashes will be held at a later date in the North Fork Cemetery in rural Western, Nebraska.

Karen "Ralph" Hayek, the heartbeat of the farm, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family at the family farm on November 17th, 2025, at the age of 78.

Karen was born September 10th, 1947, in Friend, NE, to Frank and Sylvia (Zoubek) Kotas. She was raised on a farm northeast of Western, attending country school before graduating from Western High School, Class of 1965.

After High School, Karen briefly worked at the Campbell's soup factory in Tecumseh, NE, and then Formfit in Crete, NE.

Karen married Myron Hayek on March 8th, 1969. Myron and Karen moved to the family farm west of Wilber in 1971, where they resided until retiring in 2002.

Karen farmed by Myron's side for 50 years, making their living raising corn, beans, milo, wheat, cattle, hogs, poultry, a huge garden, and 3 kids: Wendy, Doug, and Daryl.

Karen enjoyed being with family and friends and having a good ol' time. She enjoyed evening cruises, gardening, cooking and baking, and doing anything on the farm. She especially enjoyed harvest time and hauling grain with her semi, #9. Cooking for her family put her in her element, and she was a tremendous cook with her specialty being the traditional Czech meal of duck, dumplings, and kraut.

She was an active member of Saline Center Hall and was always present for baking kolaches and socializing with the gals.

Karen is survived by her daughter, Wendy Keller; sons, Doug (Hillary) Hayek, Daryl (Roxy) Hayek; Grandchildren, Seth (Jordan) Keller, Zack (Meredith Hoffman) Keller, Logan (Russell Korinek) Hayek, Rylee (Sam) Zeleny, Kaylee (Dan) Slepicka, Collin (Tara Schroeder) Hayek, and Cooper Hayek; Great Grandchildren, Lucy Keller, Roayn Clausen-Zeleny and Rextin Zeleny, Dax and Josie Slepicka; Brother, Melvin Kotas; Sisters-in-law, Lois Kotas and Carol Kotas; Brother-in-law, Bob Kasl; and many nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Myron; parents, Frank and Sylvia Kotas; parents-in-law, Lumir and Evelyn Hayek; son-in-law, Darin Keller; brothers, Gerald and Roger Kotas; sisters-in-law, Barb Kotas and Marva Kasl; nephews, Bobby and Brad Kasl; niece, Jean Essman.

Cemetery Details

North Fork Cemetery

State Highway 15
Western, NE 68464

Previous Events

Memorial Service

NOV 30. 2:00 PM (CT)

Saline Center Hall
1102 County Road M
Western, NE 68464

Tribute Wall



“ 57 files added to the album Flower Arrangements



Farmer & Son Funeral Home - November 30, 2025 at 04:52 PM

RJ

“ Rick and Janice Johns purchased the Fiery Lily and Rose for the family of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.



Rick and Janice Johns - November 26, 2025 at 05:24 PM

RJ

“ Rick and Janice Johns planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.

Rick and Janice Johns - November 26, 2025 at 05:24 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.*



November 26, 2025 at 10:28 AM



“ *The Kowalski's and Mitch & Cass planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.*

The Kowalski's and Mitch & Cass - November 26, 2025 at 10:28 AM



“ *Grafton Farms, Troy, Ted & Jeff purchased the Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses for the family of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.*



Grafton Farms, Troy, Ted & Jeff - November 21, 2025 at 04:25 PM



“ *Derek and Stephanie Damman and kids purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.*



Derek and Stephanie Damman and kids - November 18, 2025 at 08:39 PM

LG

“ Lowell, Fintel, Sieck and Jelinek girls purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.



Lowell, Fintel, Sieck and Jelinek girls - November 18, 2025 at 05:55 PM

LG

“ Lowell, Fintel, Sieck and Jelinek girls planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.

Lowell, Fintel, Sieck and Jelinek girls - November 18, 2025 at 05:55 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Karen A. "Ralph" Hayek.



November 18, 2025 at 01:50 PM