



Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien

August 4, 1965 - May 22, 2025

A Funeral Service for Mark was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Geneva, Nebraska with Pastor Tim Stacy presiding.

Pianist, Sharie Hubert, accompanied the congregation as they sang, "How Great Thou Art", "Borning Cry" and "Amazing Grace.

Pallbearers included Paul O'Brien, Britt O'Brien, Pat O'Brien, Tim Warrelmann, Todd Dinslage, Robb Urschel and Dan Nun.

Honorary Pallbearers were Matt Loseke, Brad Ricenbaw, Ryder Ricenbaw and Reese Ricenbaw.

Graveside Services were conducted following the funeral service at the Geneva Public Cemetery in Geneva, Nebraska.

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

Mark Don O'Brien was born to Michael R. O'Brien and Donna N. O'Brien (Galusha) on August 4, 1965 at Geneva Hospital in Geneva, Nebraska, and passed away on May 22, 2025 at Fillmore County Hospital in Geneva, Nebraska at the age of 59 years old. He was one of six children in the family.

The love of the land was instilled in Mark at a young age growing up on the O'Brien fifth generation homestead; whether it was cattle, chickens, or eventually the love of hogs. Mark was a steward of all living things and especially of his family's land. He loved working beside his dad and brothers despite the challenges of working on a family farm. Growing up in a household of six kids, there was rarely a quiet moment and always something going on. This may be where his love of being alone in his cabless tractor with nothing but AM radio began.

During his junior high years, Mark gained the nickname 'Ope'—a name most people knew him by. He earned this nickname because he resembled the character Opie from The Andy Griffith Show in his kindergarten photo. While growing up on the farm, the O'Brien brothers needed a 'home base' in town—and the Warrlemann family graciously stepped in. They quickly became a second home for Ope. Through the many adventures and experiences Ope shared with his friends over the years, lifelong friendships were formed—bonds that remain deeply important to him to this day. Ope was a true “old soul” from a young age from his love of music, and writing checks for ridiculously small amounts.

After high school, Ope went to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and joined AGS where he had plenty of fun, but eventually realized his heart belonged on the farm. He then worked for Tommy and Pat O'Brien. Tommy would say Ope's brain turned to bubble gum at 5pm after he met this “special friend” Shaunna Lichti. He used his gift of being a good listener to not only his friends but to eventually gain the love of his life.

Ope and Shaunna dated on and off for a few years, but Ope always said he knew, 'She was the one.' Ope married his best friend Shaunna on November 23, 1990, at Prince of Peace. Their marriage was filled with love and laughter

—joys that only grew deeper when they welcomed their two daughters, Brielle and Ashton. From early on, it was clear he was the best girl dad. As a family of four, they spent lots of time playing games, watching movies, and most importantly spending time together in their “talking room”. Little did they know, that room was where they would make some of their favorite memories. Even when the girls were out of the house, he somehow always knew exactly what they needed. Whether it was to say hello, bring a treat, help out at their house, or just give a big hug. One thing is for sure, Ope loved his girls.

Throughout the years, the O’Brien Brothers shifted their focus to only crop farming, which decreased the number of headaches only slightly. Ope’s gifts were not limited to his time on the farm, but also with the winter’s spent working at Lichti’s using his hands to build and ears to listen. He always had a servant heart which was shown as his time as the Chaplin for Sons of the American Legion, something he full heartedly served until his last day. As the seasons came and went, one thing never changed: nothing made him happier than the smell of freshly turned soil in the springtime.

To the world he was many things, but to his grandchildren, he was simply 'Papa'—and that was his greatest joy. Ryder and Reese quickly became the center of his world. There wasn’t anything he wouldn’t stop even to spend just five minutes with them. One of Ope’s mottos was “5 minutes, 5 hours, 5 days - every moment is a blessing.” He truly lived his life this way and was a man who lived out his faith every day, never taking a single second for granted. His love wasn’t only for his immediate family, but extended to his friends who became family; whether that be from weekends spent at the lake or committees at church. Nothing made him happier than having a full back row pew and watching his grandchildren give noise offerings every Sunday.

His optimism, faith, sarcasm and sense of humor carried him through many

trials throughout his life. Life here on earth was too short for Ope, but one thing he always said was that it is not about the first or last day but the dash that represents everything in between. This doesn't begin to scratch the surface on who Ope was or all the lives he touched. His legacy of kindness, love and laughter lives on in so many of us who were blessed enough to love and be loved by him.

He was preceded in death by his father Michael O'Brien.

He was survived in death by his wife Shaunna O'Brien (Grafton, NE), daughter Brielle and her husband Brad Ricenbaw (Friend, NE), daughter Ashton and husband Matt Loseke (Fairmont, NE), and grandchildren Ryder and Reese Ricenbaw, mother Donna O'Brien (Fairmont, NE), mother and father in law; Max and Sandy Lichti (Geneva, NE), brothers; Dan O'Brien and wife Lois and family (Colby, KS), Paul O'Brien and Nancy Chaney and family (Geneva, NE), Britt O'Brien and Amy Schoenholtz and family (Bruning, NE), sisters; Teresa Anderson and husband Dale and family (Yutan, NE), and Kathryn and Dave Renning and family (Valentine, NE), brother and sister in laws; Brandon and Amy Lichti and family (Omaha, NE), and Darin Lichti and family (Geneva, NE), and many nieces and nephews, other relatives, and a host of dear friends.

Cemetery Details

Geneva Public Cemetery

Geneva, NE 68361

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 26. 1:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Farmer & Son Funeral Home
242 N 10th Street
Geneva, NE 68361
(402) 759-3617
<https://farmerandsonfuneralhome.com>

Family Present for Visitation

MAY 26. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Farmer & Son Funeral Home
242 N 10th Street
Geneva, NE 68361
(402) 759-3617
<https://farmerandsonfuneralhome.com>

Funeral Service

MAY 27. 10:30 AM (CT)

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
1026 O St
Geneva, NE 68361

Tribute Wall



“ Jon & Pam Franck lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien



Jon & Pam Franck - May 31, 2025 at 10:09 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Funeral Program



Farmer & Son Funeral Home - May 27, 2025 at 03:16 PM



“ 169 files added to the album Flower Arrangements



Farmer & Son Funeral Home - May 27, 2025 at 01:45 PM

BM

“ I am so sorry for your loss. My sincere sympathy to the whole family. Hugs.



Beverly Mohlman - May 27, 2025 at 12:55 PM

HF

“ Holly Rippe & Doug Fischer lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien



Holly Rippe & Doug Fischer - May 27, 2025 at 08:45 AM

DS

“ Dylan & Mercedes Scheele purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Dylan & Mercedes Scheele - May 26, 2025 at 11:23 AM

DS

“ Dylan & Mercedes Scheele planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.

Dylan & Mercedes Scheele - May 26, 2025 at 11:23 AM

LM

“ Love, Mackenzie purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Love, Mackenzie - May 25, 2025 at 09:15 PM

GW

“ Garrett and Hannah Whitley purchased the Love's Journey for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Garrett and Hannah Whitley - May 25, 2025 at 04:37 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.

May 25, 2025 at 02:26 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



May 25, 2025 at 02:26 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



May 25, 2025 at 09:16 AM



“ *Mike, Kim, Stacy, and Eric Kamler* purchased the *Beautiful in Blue* for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Mike, Kim, Stacy, and Eric Kamler - May 25, 2025 at 01:41 AM



“ *Love's Journey* was purchased for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



May 24, 2025 at 10:14 PM



“ *Roger and Susan Hall* purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Roger and Susan Hall - May 24, 2025 at 09:50 PM

RH

“ Roger and Susan Hall planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.

Roger and Susan Hall - May 24, 2025 at 09:50 PM

LR

“ Love Rick and Teresa Ricenbaw planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.

Love Rick and Teresa Ricenbaw - May 24, 2025 at 09:36 PM

LR

“ Love Rick and Teresa Ricenbaw purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Love Rick and Teresa Ricenbaw - May 24, 2025 at 09:36 PM

WF

“ With much hope and love, The Forkes(Hall) purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



With much hope and love, The Forkes(Hall) - May 24, 2025 at 08:28 PM

CO

“ Cole purchased the Gracious Lavender Basket for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Cole - May 24, 2025 at 06:15 PM

CB

“ Chad & Stacie Becwar planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.

Chad & Stacie Becwar - May 24, 2025 at 04:19 PM

CB

“ Chad & Stacie Becwar purchased the Gracious Lavender Basket for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Chad & Stacie Becwar - May 24, 2025 at 04:19 PM

CC

“ Chad Wythers and Sierra Crees planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.

Chad Wythers and Sierra Crees - May 24, 2025 at 03:59 PM

CC

“ Chad Wythers and Sierra Crees purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Chad Wythers and Sierra Crees - May 24, 2025 at 03:59 PM

LC

“ Love, Steve, Trina, Ashleigh and Charley planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.

Love, Steve, Trina, Ashleigh and Charley - May 24, 2025 at 11:22 AM

LC

“ Love, Steve, Trina, Ashleigh and Charley purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.



Love, Steve, Trina, Ashleigh and Charley - May 24, 2025 at 11:22 AM

JG

“ Jason george lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien



Jason george - May 24, 2025 at 04:19 AM

DD

“ *Deb Ochsner Davis lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien*



Deb Ochsner Davis - May 23, 2025 at 10:21 PM

BP

“ *Ben&Nancy Pekar lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien*



Ben&Nancy Pekar - May 23, 2025 at 07:42 PM

JF

“ *John and Alexandra Clouse & family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.*



John and Alexandra Clouse & family - May 23, 2025 at 06:59 PM

WF

“ *Wallin family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.*



Wallin family - May 23, 2025 at 06:52 PM

VJ

“ *Such a great guy! He will be greatly missed!*



Virginia Johnson - May 23, 2025 at 06:40 PM

KT

“ *Kent & Rose Theobald lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien*



Kent & Rose Theobald - May 23, 2025 at 06:20 PM

BR

“ *Bonnier Rippe lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien*



Bonnie Rippe - May 23, 2025 at 05:16 PM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Mark D. "Ope" O'Brien.*



May 23, 2025 at 04:56 PM

BS

“ *Barb Sadd lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien*



Barb Sadd - May 23, 2025 at 04:35 PM

JW

“ *Wonderful man! Rest in peace and watch over those grand babies!*
Jeff and Barb Whitley



Jeff and Barb Whitley - May 23, 2025 at 03:25 PM

LD

“ *Lyn Nannen Duden lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien*



Lyn Nannen Duden - May 23, 2025 at 03:08 PM

CR

“ *Ope was such a great man always with a smile on his face. So sorry for the family at this difficult time.*



Caleb Rippe - May 23, 2025 at 01:29 PM

DJ

“ *Doug & Patty Johnson lit a candle in memory of Mark O'Brien*



Doug & Patty Johnson - May 23, 2025 at 01:21 PM