



## Rodney J Renken

August 25, 1952 - April 20, 2024

A Memorial Service for Rodney was held on Saturday, May 4, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. at the United Methodist Church in Geneva, Nebraska. Pastor Doug Griger presided over the Memorial Service. A private Committal of Ashes will take place at a later date at Geneva Public Cemetery.

Melissa Houchin accompanied the congregation in the singing of "His Eye Is On The Sparrow," "How Great Thou Art," and "On Eagle's Wings." The recorded selection "Con Te Partiro" by Andrea Bocelli was played at the conclusion of the Memorial Service.

Honorary Pallbearers included Alisha Renken, Ryan Renken, Jeramiah Uldrich, Adison Renken, and Ryden Renken.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to Geneva Fire & Rescue, UMCOR, and TeamMates Mentoring Program.

Rodney J. Renken, 71, passed away at Bryan East in Lincoln, Nebraska on April 20, 2024 due to complications from acute myeloid leukemia. Rod, the son of Everett and Josephine Renken, was born on August 25, 1952 and attended Geneva Public Schools where he graduated in 1970. During his childhood, Rod grew up on a farm on the edge of town where they raised milking cows, sheep, and horses. He enjoyed the day-to-day responsibilities

of the farm and developed a strong work ethic that would serve him well the rest of his life. He formed a close bond with his horse, Sugarfoot, and they joined the local Saddle Club and built many memories together. Rod always felt that he had the best childhood one could ever ask for in that he lived on a farm, but could still hop on his bicycle and ride to the park, pool, and school.

After attending the University of Nebraska at Lincoln for a couple of years, he married Sandi Best, his best friend and lifelong companion of 51 years on March 3, 1973. After marrying, they moved to Lincoln to work various jobs and in 1975, they moved to Goehner where Rod traveled as a field planter and harvester for Funk Seed Hybrids. While he enjoyed the work, he was away from Sandi for extended periods of time and wanted to find work close to home. In late 1976, Rod and his father bought a plumbing business in Geneva and they moved “home” to start a new adventure. He loved working with his dad every day and enjoyed the challenges of learning a new trade. Countless hours were spent “tinkering” in the shop with woodworking, repairing, and making family treasures and memories. Rod was always on the move and if you needed to talk with him, your best bet was to check the “fix it shop”.

During this time, Rod and Sandi expanded their family with two children, Alisha in 1980 and Ryan in 1988. Family was everything to Rod, he loved them dearly and they were always the center of his attention. In 1978, Rod and Sandi became charter members of the Geneva Rescue Squad where they spent countless hours fundraising in order to purchase the first rescue unit and equipment. The kids and extended family knew that rescue calls were 24/7 and that helping others was an important part of doing the right thing and living a full life. Rod remained active with Geneva Rescue for 46 years, nearly meeting his goal of 50 years on the rescue squad. He continued to hope that they would keep doing the important work and become bigger and better.

Once Rod closed the plumbing business in 1997, he put his “fix it” skills to

work at Fillmore County Hospital as a full-time maintenance person, working there until his retirement in 2017. Over the course of these years, he continued his interest in expanding his skills as an EMT and felt that Paramedicine would be a good fit for him and the hospital. So, during his time outside of work, he enrolled in classes and became a certified paramedic, the first in the emergency room at Fillmore County Hospital. He helped countless people in need through his work in health care and as an EMT and Paramedic and he gained tremendous personal satisfaction from having the ability to serve in that capacity. Rod also spent several years as a certified EMT instructor training a new generation of EMTs to carry on the work that was so important to him.

It was well known that Rod could not sit still. He was always volunteering with various clubs and organizations while still putting God and his family activities at the top of his list. His tireless desire to help others touched many people across the community and serving for 5 years as a TeamMates mentor for a local student was very rewarding for him. His willingness to assist family with projects took him across the country “to help out” those he loved. If he ever heard someone say “It can’t be done”, he would respond with, “Can’t just takes a little longer”.

Rod will be most remembered for his kind smile, the twinkle in his eye, his sense of humor, a passion for problem solving and for always offering a helping hand. People that really knew Rod found his sincerity, kindness, and love of family a model for others to aspire toward. Whether it was visiting around the table at holiday celebrations or sitting on the front porch enjoying the evening air, it brought him great joy to be around his family.

Rod was preceded in death by his parents, Everett and Josephine Renken; brother, Gaylord Renken; brother-in-law Darrel Hoffman; his parents-in-law

Donald and Donna Best and nephew-in-law Anthony Bertuccelli.

He is survived by his wife, Sandi; children, Alisha Renken and Ryan Renken; grandchildren, Jeramiah Uldrich, Adison Renken, and Ryden Renken; sister, Sandra Hoffman; brother, Michael (Sue) Renken; in-laws, Cristy & Keith Koch, Cherryl Bertuccelli, Brad & Dianna Best, and Carol Best; and a host of nieces, nephews, and friends.

# Cemetery Details

## Geneva Public Cemetery

Geneva, NE 68361

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 3. 4:00 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 3. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

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

## Memorial Service

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MAY 4. 10:30 AM (CT)

United Methodist Church  
942 H Street  
Geneva, NE 68361  
(402) 759-3731  
[umc@windstream.net](mailto:umc@windstream.net)

# Tribute Wall

AR

“ His actions spoke louder than words, he has always made time where there is none, coming through time after time, year after year...after year. He transformed promises into reality and there has never been such words as "never" or "cant". My father was the true daily triumph of integrity! Im blessed to have lived and learned in such grace! 💖💖

*I miss you dearly..*



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**Alisha Renken** - February 27, 2025 at 08:12 AM

GM

“ Gerry Merck lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken

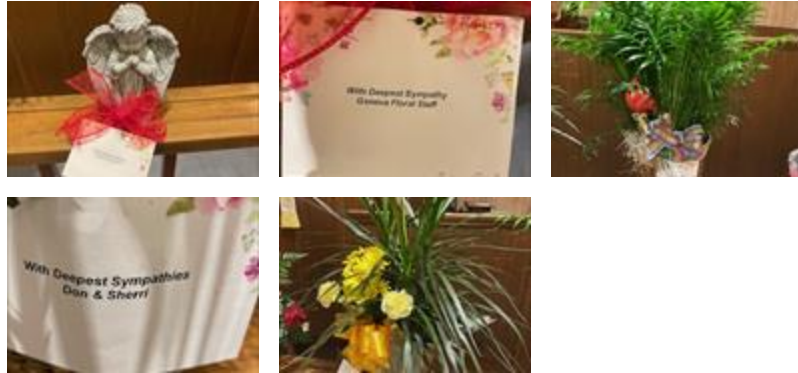


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**Gerry Merck** - February 10, 2025 at 05:10 PM



“ 46 files added to the album Flower Pictures



Farmer & Son Funeral Home - May 04, 2024 at 12:37 PM



“ Jan lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



Jan Wood - May 04, 2024 at 12:28 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Rodney J Renken.



May 04, 2024 at 12:39 AM



“ Glenda W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rodney J Renken.

Glenda W. - May 03, 2024 at 04:03 PM

GW

“ I was sad to learn of Rod's passing. I remember all those times I was in the ambulance caring for a critically ill patient and he was our driver heading for one of the Lincoln hospitals. He was always so calm, helpful and kind. He truly found his calling in this life. He will be missed by everyone who knew him. My sincere condolences to Sandi and family.

Glenda Weintz

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Glenda Weintz - May 03, 2024 at 03:56 PM

BB

“ Sandi and family, So sorry to hear of Rod's passing. He was a great guy. I remember him driving me to Lincoln in the ambulance and trying to avoid the holes in the road. He said, sorry Brenda I know those bumps probably hurt more with the pain your in but I will buy you a soda next time I see you.. He was also one of them that took Mom to the hospital.. He was very caring. May you all find peace in your time of need. 🙏

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Brenda Bonin - May 01, 2024 at 05:06 PM

RV

“ Robert Votipka lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



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Robert D. Votipka - April 29, 2024 at 04:07 PM

CC

“ Sandi, my heart goes out to you and your family. Thoughts and prayers are with you.

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carol conley - April 28, 2024 at 01:34 PM

LP

“ I have always had a great deal of admiration & respect for Rod. When we were both employed at FCH he was always willing to help & you couldn't help but smile when you met him in the hallway as there was always a smile on his face. He was on a rescue call to our home on more than one occasion. His presence was always reassuring for both patient & family. He will be missed! Heaven has gained an angel. Prayers for Renken & Best families.



LaDonna Pendleton - April 26, 2024 at 02:40 PM

MW

“ Melea Walters lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



Melea Walters - April 26, 2024 at 02:31 PM

SM

“ Sandra Mewhirter lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



Sandra L Mewhirter - April 26, 2024 at 12:03 PM

EP

“ Erin P. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rodney J Renken.

Erin P. - April 26, 2024 at 08:10 AM

SH

“ Rod was such a positive person. He had the gift of lighting up a room. I know that he loved Sandi fiercely! Over the years I would see him at Sandi’s parents’ house helping in the yard. He impressed me with his dedication and care for others and support for Sandi. Sandi and Rod looked out for Bob Brooks, their neighbor, and assisted him and his daughter, Lori, in so many ways over the years.

*The Renken family and the Best family have always been amazing people. Prayers for all of them.*

*Sharon Lauber*

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**SharonLauber** - April 25, 2024 at 06:19 PM

SJ

“ I always felt safe in any situation when Rod was around whether it was a critical ER waiting for the helicopter or driving down interstate 90 miles an hour with him at the wheel and me with a very distressed patient in back. He was one very special guy and will be deeply missed by all who knew him or worked with him. Suzann Johnson

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**suzann Johnson** - April 24, 2024 at 10:22 PM

CR

“ Caleb Rippe lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



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**Caleb Rippe** - April 24, 2024 at 08:44 PM

CB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Carol Best** - April 24, 2024 at 05:14 PM

AB

“ Truly one of the best! Rod always had a smile on his face and constantly helping everyone around him. He will leave a huge hole to be filled. My sympathy to Sandy and all his family. May God give you peace during this difficult time.

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**Audrey B** - April 24, 2024 at 01:20 PM

HS

“ So many fond many memories of Rod and his love of EMS

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**Hope Strate** - April 24, 2024 at 08:55 AM

SB

“ Sandy Rick Bolejack lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



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**Sandy & Rick Bolejack** - April 23, 2024 at 10:22 PM



“ *Rhonda Schlick lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken*



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**Rhonda Schlick** - April 23, 2024 at 09:32 PM

LE

“ *Sandy and family,  
We were so sad to hear of Rod's passing. Rod worked at FCH for many years when I was in charge. He began in the maintenance department and driving the ambulance for me. He had a desire for knowledge and teaching and became an instructor for EMTs, then later began his career as a paramedic. Rod would stop what he was doing for himself and help anyone with anything. He was a good employee and a great guy. He will be missed by all who knew him. May the peace of Christ surround you and your family at this difficult time.  
God Bless!  
Larry and Barbara Eichelberger*

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**Larry Eichelberger** - April 23, 2024 at 07:05 PM

MH

“ *My memories of Rod are mostly from our grade school years. I remember that he was ornery but really fun to be around. He was a friend to all and always seemed to be smiling or laughing about something. I had the pleasure of spending time with him at the 1970 Geneva class reunion. He was proud of his accomplishments and proud of his wife and family. We should all be so lucky. My condolences to the family. I'm sure his loss has left a hole in your heart.*

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**Mary Halkyard** - April 23, 2024 at 05:53 PM

DS

“ I'll always remember his great smile! He was an all around nice guy. Always acknowledged you whenever he saw you.

Deb Stanek - April 23, 2024 at 04:29 PM

DW

“ So sorry to hear of Rod's passing. He was always willing to help with a smile on his face. You will be missed Rod!

Diane Weber - April 23, 2024 at 02:43 PM

GH

“ Gary Sue Heironymus lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



Gary and Sue Heironymus - April 23, 2024 at 01:15 PM

JF

“ Jeanie Fast lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



Jeanie Fast - April 23, 2024 at 12:32 PM

CH

“ What a wonderful guy, working with him was a joy, even when the worst of the worst come into the ER. He will be missed.

Carol Hopken - April 23, 2024 at 11:36 AM

SS

“ Steve Barb Sadd lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken



Steve & Barb Sadd - April 23, 2024 at 10:19 AM

BA

“ It was a true pleasure to know Rod, he always had a smile on his face! He was a wonderful TeamMates mentor, always there and always so positive! Prayers to Sandy and family. He will be missed by so many!

Becky Adkisson - April 23, 2024 at 10:17 AM

LG

“ I am so sorry to hear of Rod's passing. He was such a good person, volunteer, willing to help you whenever he could.  
Prayers to Sandi and the family  
Liz Gerberding & family

Liz Gerberding - April 23, 2024 at 09:12 AM

VJ

“ Rod was a guy that would help anyone! Such a genuine guy that will be deeply miss! RIP, Rod!



Virginia Johnson - April 22, 2024 at 08:08 PM

KT

“ *Kent Rose Theobald lit a candle in memory of Rodney Renken*



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**Kent & Rose Theobald** - April 22, 2024 at 06:32 PM

DD

“ *Served with Rod for years on Geneva Rescue Squad. Thought and prayers to Sandy and family*

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**Debbie Durgan** - April 22, 2024 at 04:41 PM