



## Ruth Ann Ekeler

April 4, 1943 - March 4, 2014

Ruth Ann Conner Ekeler was born on April 4, 1943 in Omaha, NE. In September of 1949, she and her sister Faye were adopted by Virgil and Esther Conner of Friend. She passed away March 4, 2014 at the age of 70 years and 11 months at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Lincoln surrounded by all eight of her children and their spouses, many of her grandchildren, her sister Faye, and several other family members.

After being adopted by Virgil and Esther Conner, Ruth attended Friend Public Schools. After her graduation in 1961, she attended St. Elizabeth School of Nursing in Lincoln. She graduated and became a Registered Nurse in 1964. Ruth married Wilfrid Ekeler of Exeter on August 26, 1966. To this union, eight children were born: Michael, Gregory, Estelle, Jennifer, Catherine, Elizabeth, and twins, Monika and Mary.

Ruth was called to nursing from an early age and after her graduation from St. E's, worked as a nurse for 44 years. Ruth's workplaces included St. Elizabeth Hospital in Lincoln, Warren Memorial Hospital in Friend, Rivendell in Seward, Henderson Care Center, and Exeter Care Center. Ruth was an inspiration to many in the nursing profession and the relationships she had with the many people she worked with over the years were very important to her. She retired from nursing in 2008.

Ruth was a member of St. Stephen's Parish in Exeter for 48 years.

Throughout her years there, she served on the St. Stephen's Altar Society and played the organ.

In her early years, Ruth enjoyed sewing of all kinds and made most of the clothing for her three oldest children as well as Halloween costumes, including the famous tiger costumes that have been worn now by two generations.

Ruth and her husband Willy loved attending sporting and school events for their children as they were growing up. Ruth spent countless hours on the bleachers at the Exeter High School gymnasium and in her lawn chair at track meets and at the baseball/softball fields. She kept stats at every event.

Ruth was an avid cook and was especially known for her award-winning gravy. Some of her other specialties included roast beef, mashed potatoes, beef and noodles, chicken soup, goulash, breakfast casseroles, coffee cake, and macaroni and cheese.

Ruth was preceded in death by her husband Willy, her father Virgil Conner, her step-father Joe Deterding, her brothers-in-law Wally "Gator" Neemann and Dwight Doran, nieces Geri Doran Yanes and Lori Neemann Becker, nephew Frank Doran, and brother Ray Snell.

Ruth is survived by her eight children, sons Mike and Kris Ekeler of Geneva, Greg Ekeler of Exeter, Daughters Estelle and Ted DeJonge of Roca, Jennifer of Lincoln, Cathy of Lincoln, Liz and Dan Kallhoff of Exeter, Monika Ekeler of Lincoln, and Mary Ekeler of Exeter, 10 grandchildren, Matt and Susan Ekeler of Geneva, Nicole Ekeler and Christian Haumont of Geneva, Zach Ekeler of Fremont, Kevin, Kelsey, and Kaleb DeJonge of Roca, and Troy, Brett, Wilfrid, and Thomas Kallhoff of Exeter, and one great grandchild, Hailey Ekeler of Geneva. She is also survived by her sister and best friend Faye Neemann of Exeter, her mother Esther Deterding of Exeter, sister Ernestine and Gene Felton of Longview, WA, brothers Miles "Dick" Snell of Kenmore, WA, Jay and Jo Woodward of Omaha, Bob and Marty Mitchell of Edison, Dale and Kay Miller of Peoria, AZ, and Ron Hughes and Sheri Harig of Lincoln and many cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

Funeral Mass for Ruth will be 10:00 a.m. Monday, March 10, 2014, at the St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Exeter, Nebraska.

Visitation will begin Sunday from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. at the Farmer

Funeral Home in Exeter.

Rosary will be 7:00 p.m. Sunday at the St. Stephens Catholic Church.

Interment will be in the Exeter Cemetery. Memorials are directed to the Willy and Ruth Memorial Scholarship in lieu of flowers.

# Tribute Wall

SM

“ My prayers go out to the family during this time. I remember spending time at your family home while I grew up not to far from all of you. I always felt welcomed by Ruth and Willy. You know me better as Shana Koehn.

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**Shana Mayberry** - March 14, 2014 at 01:23 PM

SS

“ Family of Ruth Ekeler Sorry for your loss of your mother. She was an amazing person and will be greatly missed in Exeter and at St. Stephens Catholic Church. God Bless you all Stephanie Stevens-Salyer

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**Stephanie Stevens-Salyer** - March 11, 2014 at 10:52 PM

AP

“ So sorry to hear about the loss of your loved one.

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**Angie Petersen-stemley** - March 11, 2014 at 08:37 AM

SN

“ So sorry about Ruth. We spent three years together at St. Elizabeth Nursing School and shared many adventures on our journey to becoming registered nurses. I was hoping we would see her at our 50th reunion this summer. My classmates will undoubtedly have many fond memories to share about her when we meet together. My prayers are with your family. Sharon Neemann

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**Sharon Schmidt Neemann** - March 09, 2014 at 11:06 PM

JD

“ We want to send you our most heartfelt sympathy. Ruth was a great friend. She meant so much to all those who knew her and will be so missed by so many people. You are in our thoughts. John and Carol

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**John and Carol Dumpert** - March 08, 2014 at 12:24 PM

MC

“ Wow! What a legacy! I attended St. Elizabeth's with Ruth and she was one heck of a lady...funny, cheerful, and a delight to be around. It states in our Junior year book "The Stripe" that she was "nice and quiet...once you got to know her just nice!" In our senior year it states, " Consciencious, Talented and Fun Loving"...attributes that followed her throughout her life.

Once I left Nebraska, we didn't keep in touch much. Our classmates were looking to all being together this summer for our 50th. She will be missed.

I lost my husband and father of our five children this past year, I can't imagine what is like to lose both parents. Her children will be in my heart, thoughts and prayers.

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**Mary Ann Clinch Curry** - March 07, 2014 at 11:02 PM

TB

“ OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU ALL. GOD HAS TOOK HOME ANOTHER ANGEL.

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**TIM AND SHARON BECKER** - March 07, 2014 at 09:45 PM

PH

“ My deepest sympathy to all of the family of Ruth. She was quite a lady and will be missed by so many.

Sincerely,  
Pat Hoffschneider

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**Patricia Hoffschneider** - March 07, 2014 at 04:43 PM

BC

“ Holding you in our hearts and prayers at this sad time. May you find comfort in your faith, your memories and your family and friends.  
*Bill and Kay Coffey*

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**Bill and Kay Coffey** - March 07, 2014 at 01:34 PM

MH

“ Our condolences to all the family. Ruth was a terrific lady.

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**Mike & Anita Haumont** - March 07, 2014 at 01:26 PM

DP

“ What a wonderful tribute to Ruth. She will always be remembered by those whose lives she touched so deeply. Our condolences to all of you.

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**Dave & Patti Pearce** - March 07, 2014 at 01:21 PM

PK

“ My deepest sympathy is extended to the entire family. How blessed I have been to have experienced Ruth's friendship over the years. She will always hold a special place in my heart. Ruth's love of life and family will be a legacy that will never disappear.

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**Paula kaiser-Asmus** - March 07, 2014 at 12:12 PM

OD

“ We were saddened to learn of Ruth's passing. We have many memories of her and she will be missed by all who knew her. Our prayers are with all of you at this time and we pray God will hold you in his hands and ease your grief. Owen & Eva Deterding

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**Owen Eva Deterding** - March 07, 2014 at 12:03 AM

CK

“ Ekeler family - so sorry for the loss of your mom. I know you have a lot of great memories and hopefully that will help get you through this difficult time.

Colleen Krasser Knott - March 06, 2014 at 04:34 PM

BR

“ Bob and Tammy Randall has sent this Expressions of Sympathy card.

Bob and Tammy Randall - March 06, 2014 at 04:22 PM

SH

“ My sympathies to your family and the entire community during this difficult time. The thoughts and prayers of many are with you. May God's Light shine upon you and may your precious memories of your mother always be with you. Sharon

Sharon Harre-Kenaston - March 06, 2014 at 04:04 PM

TW

“ Dear Ekeler Family,  
There was just ONE Ruth.....we loved her so very much.  
We are here for you if you need anything.  
Hold on tight to one another. That is what your parents would want their children to do.

Tim and Kathleen Wilbeck - March 06, 2014 at 01:33 PM

KB

“ You Mom was a great nurse we knew her when she worked at the hospital when our daughter was born. our prayers are with at this time of sorrow.

Ken & Barb - March 06, 2014 at 11:13 AM

PD

“ *What a wonderful life. Not much needs to be said about both Willy and Ruth to know how great of people they were. All you need to do is look at those 7 kids (hope I counted them right). I remember sitting in the back seat of their car after I carried the wedding rings up the isle at their wedding (not sure how I got in their car). Anyway, Willy was mad as heck that as he started to drive away there were beer cans tied on the back bumper. He slammed on the brakes and started getting out of the car and I can still hear Ruth, "Wilfred Ekeler you get back in this car and leave those cans out there. Those kids worked hard on that." From what I remember Willy ripped off half the cans and left the rest. No wonder they had a wonderful marriage and life. I remember not too long after the wedding one family member came up with a silly way of teasing Willy that we got a lot of mileage out of over the years. We would always say: Hey Uncle Willy, now that you are married at least your not "Ruth-less" anymore. He would just laugh and Ruth would just roll her eyes. Well Uncle Willy one thing I am very happy about is that after a the last few years alone up there, at least your not "Ruth-less" anymore. Give her a big hug from me and God Bless both of you.*

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**Paul Doran** - March 05, 2014 at 06:08 PM

GA

“ *Ruth was such a fantastic daughter to a 100 year old mother - my prayers for all of you; loved visiting with Ruth at the Exeter Care Center.*

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**Ginny Adams** - March 05, 2014 at 04:14 PM