

The Life of Leon Stange



Services for Leon Stange, 84, of Stratford will be 11:00 a.m., Friday, June 1st at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Ferney. Rev. Craig Grams will officiate. Burial will follow in Sunset Memorial Gardens, Aberdeen under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the chapel on Thursday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Leon Stange, born August 23rd, 1933 to Hubert and Viola Stange in Stratford, passed away peacefully on May 25th, 2018, his 62nd wedding anniversary, after a battle with heart disease.

He went to grade school in Verdon and high school in Conde. He married Wanda (Vitense) May 25th, 1956 in Columbia. He served in the Army and Army Reserve from January 1957 to July 1962.

Leon farmed with his dad on the Stange homestead until 1972, when he moved his family onto the farmstead after Hubert and Viola moved to Redfield. Leon was the South Dakota Outstanding Young Farmer in 1969. However, Leon was also an entrepreneur, long before it was trendy. He did

custom combining in the early 50's and again in the 80's. While still farming during an extended drought period, Stange Trucking began and operated from 1966 to 1978. Starting with one semi, Leon expanded to a fleet of semis, eventually moving the operation from Stratford to Redfield.

In 1979 Truck World began and was Leon's favorite adventure. The man could sell trucks! He excelled because he was a uniquely honest salesman. He very much enjoyed buying trucks by phone and going to get them with his buddies who drove them back. Let's just say he bought and sold a LOT of trucks in the past 38 years, had lots of fun, and made friends in many states. During this time Leon gathered quite a collection of antique tractors.

Family was important to Leon. He raised his children with a strong work ethic which was very important to him. He balanced work and family (and extended family) through pheasant hunting, playing pool and drinking libations, snowmobiling on holidays, piloting water skiers in his boat at Pickerel Lake, camping at Vitense family reunions, Februarys in Yuma, and just visiting-he seemed to know everyone. Leon loved to fish the Missouri River and share fond memories of fishing Lake Michigan. Leon had a great sense of humor and never met a democrat that he didn't like. A pet lover, Leon always had a dog, a housecat (or 3), bottle lambs in the basement, goats that ate everything (that didn't last long), and when the vet had to come out to help birth a colt, Leon made sure his kids were in the barn to enjoy the miracle of new life. Leon would proudly tell anyone who would listen that his mother is 105 years old.

Leon was preceded in death by his father, Hubert Stange, brother-in-laws Durwood Wahl, John Leif, Bud Frohling, Bob Vitense, Ben Dayton, Lloyd Schelbitzki, Walt Sieber, and John Daly, sister-in-laws Myrtis Daly, Myrtle Sieber, Georgia Vitense, Norma Vitense, Angie Vitense; nephew Keith Wahl, and niece Denise Frohling.

He leaves behind his wife, Wanda, 4 sons, Cal Stange, Renner, Loy Stange, Stratford, Von (Cathy) Stange, Coralville, IA, Channon (Julie) Stange, Dell Rapids, and one daughter, Pam (Tim) O'Neil, Overland Park, KS. He also leaves behind 14 beloved grandchildren and 18 (and counting) great grandchildren, his sister, Darlene Wahl, Aberdeen, and his mother, Viola Stange at Bethesda Home, Aberdeen.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests a contribution in Leon's name to the Stratford SD Fire Department, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Ferney, SD, or the American Heart Association.