



## Marvin O. Heller

September 11, 1935 - April 11, 2025

Marvin Otto Heller was born September 11, 1935, on the family farm near Gilead, Nebraska to Karl Adolph Heller and Elda Louisa Vorderstrasse. He was born the day the carpenters arrived to start building the new barn for the farm. He attended rural school District 3, for grades 1-7. He graduated from Reynolds High School in 1952. He then attended Fairbury Junior College 1953-55. He was baptized and confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Gilead, Nebraska. He married Sandra Lee Schoenrock on August 25, 1957, at Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church, Gladstone, Nebraska. They had two children, Kellie Denise Heller Smith and Matthew Lee Heller. After receiving a junior elementary teaching certificate, he began teaching fifth grade in Hebron, Nebraska. He also taught one year in Belvidere, Nebraska before moving to Lincoln to complete his BS degree and teaching in the Lincoln Public Schools. He completed his Master of Education degree in 1963 at the University of Nebraska and

his Doctor of Education degree at the University of Northern Colorado in 1970.

He was

a teacher and professor of Education at the University of Northern Iowa for 27 years,

retiring in 1997.

He gave countless hours of volunteer time to Habitat for Humanity and Kiwanis Rough

Risers Club, was the superintendent of Sunday school, and was active in the Iowa State

Education Association. He made 13 trips to the New Orleans area to help with rebuilding after the 2005 Hurricane Katrina. He was also actively involved with Nazareth

Lutheran Church and with the Lutheran Student Center at UNI.

He was a proud supporter of UNI athletics and a season ticket holder for basketball,

volleyball, and football for many years. His hobbies included woodworking, wine

making, gardening, and antique auto restoration. He made numerous wooden items for

everyone, especially his grandchildren, and was always glad to share his wine. He

really liked country/western music and would listen to the old western classics for hours.

In his younger years, he played the guitar. After retirement, he became an avid reader

of mysteries. He also enjoyed fishing and planned many fishing trips to Minnesota with friends.

He was the patriarch of his family and will always be remembered for his adventurous

spirit and willingness to do anything or go anywhere. He traveled the state and

rarely

missed an extracurricular activity for any of his granddaughters or great grandchildren.

He loved when others had new ideas for woodworking projects, which resulted in

countless marbles boards, Kubb sets, tractors, bookshelves, wine racks, jewelry boxes

and countless other creations being shared with friends and family members all over the country.

He is preceded in death by his parents; son, Matthew Lee; brothers, Henry, and

Norbert, and sister, Ethel Saathoff.

He leaves to mourn, his wife, Sandra; daughter, Kellie (David) Smith; three grandchildren, Mallory Swenson, Leah (Alex) Crouse, Johanna (Ryan) Berkey; and

seven great grandchildren – Rylan, Thayer, Marie, Celia, Claire, Grace and Paige; a

sister, Adella Schmidt of Pueblo West, Colorado; nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be directed to Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity in Waterloo, Iowa.

# Cemetery Details

## Fairview Cemetery

12th and Division Streets  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
(319) 273-8628

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR **15**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Richardson Funeral Service  
615 Main Street  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
(319) 266-3525  
richardsonfuneralservice@gmail.com  
<http://richardson.funeralplan2.com>

## Funeral Service

APR **16**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Nazareth Lutheran Church  
7401 University Ave.  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

# Tribute Wall

MS

“ Sandra, our thoughts and prayers are with you and family. Marv was a very special guy for everything he did in his lifetime touched so many. I know how much Aaron cared about him💕💕

Merv and Chris Swenson - April 16, 2025 at 06:56 PM

DH

“ Sandra, Jerry & I send our sympathy to you on learning of Marv's death. It was always fun to see you both about campus and at athletic events! In later years I never saw one of you without the other!! Lots of hugs and prayers to you as you navigate life without your anchor!!

Diane L Headington - April 15, 2025 at 09:56 PM

JO

“ James and Stacey O'Neal purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Marvin O. Heller.



James and Stacey O'Neal - April 15, 2025 at 10:42 AM

KS

“ Uncle Marv, we will miss you immensely, your visits were always so fun as you traveled through Colorado to winter in Arizona. Always a story or two we hadn't heard before. Your wood creations will always be treasured, as well as your kind and loving heart.

Kent and Kelly Schmidt - April 15, 2025 at 10:09 AM

KS

*The entire Schmidt family have ordered a grove of trees in your memory, maybe these trees will grow strong and big and someday be used to built a habitat for humanity home in your honor.*

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**Kent and Kelly Schmidt** - April 15, 2025 at 10:11 AM

DR

*Professor Heller was key in me completing my MEd, so much in fact, that he took the time and effort to track me down in Oregon when the "Clock" was ticking down on my final requirements to satisfy my degree .... he called and reminded me. I hadn't realized time was running out, but he did, somehow, and made sure I knew! That certainly summarized how he always cared so much about his students. And what a speller he was!!!*

*Thankyou Dr. Heller.*

*Debra Reichow*

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**Debra Reichow** - April 16, 2025 at 09:53 AM



“ *A grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Marvin O. Heller.*

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April 15, 2025 at 10:03 AM

GN

“ *During many hectic times at the University of Northern Iowa, Marv was always a calming influence, understanding that we'd get through whatever turbulence we were encountering at the time. He was always steady as a rock, and for that I remain eternally appreciative.*

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**Glenn Nelson** - April 14, 2025 at 11:52 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Marvin O. Heller.*



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April 14, 2025 at 03:23 PM



“ *I came to know Dr Heller as an advisor at UNI while pursuing a degree in early elementary education. As a nontraditional student, and male to boot in a traditional female dominated profession, I appreciated Dr Heller's words of encouragement and assistance. I graduated, and spent 25 years as a second grade teacher at Cedar Heights in Cedar Falls, and Dr Heller deserves a great deal of credit for that. When we occasionally ran into each other in the community, he always asked me about school and my life. He was an excellent mentor ...*

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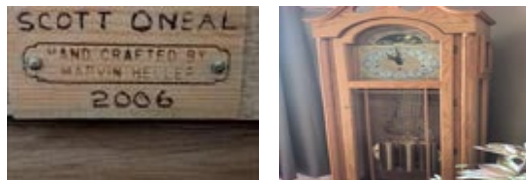
**Greg Hankins** - April 14, 2025 at 02:24 PM

SO

“ You can say that I think of Marvin every day since I have one of his clocks that he made for me! So I will always have a piece of him with me. I'll share a video of that clock here. Thank you Marv!

*I have a memory of watching Joe Namath (NY Jets) play against the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III at Marvin and Sandy's house in 1969... We watched it in the basement. I would have been 9 years old. Our family went to visit the Heller's in Lincoln for the game. Hopefully this aligns with the Heller's living in Lincoln! Either way our families spent a lot of time together and it was always enjoyable! God Bless the Heller family!*

Scott O'Neal



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Scott O'Neal - April 14, 2025 at 02:21 PM

DM

“ Marvin was a great University of Northern Iowa colleague and friend. When I was appointed Graduate Coordinator of the Geography Department at UNI, Marvin helped me navigate the paperwork. When I moved into an office without a closet, Marvin made me a really nice coat rack. Socially, Marvin and Sandra went out to eat with me for lunch many times over the years. Marvin was kind and well respected. I will miss him.

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David W May - April 14, 2025 at 01:37 AM

TF

“ *The Huss Family purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Marvin O. Heller.*



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**The Huss Family** - April 13, 2025 at 05:54 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Marvin O. Heller.*



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April 13, 2025 at 12:55 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Marvin O. Heller.*

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April 13, 2025 at 12:55 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Marvin O. Heller.*



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April 12, 2025 at 08:41 PM

IE

“ *Ivan Eland purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Marvin O. Heller.*



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**Ivan Eland** - April 12, 2025 at 08:40 PM

CS

“ *Walt and I were happy to share our grapes with Marvin, and he always returned with some bottles of wine. The grapevine had special meaning, as it was started from the grapevine on Carolyn's parents' farm. Her dad, Cliff made wine, but not nearly as good as Marvins!*

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**Carolyn Stephenson** - April 12, 2025 at 08:10 PM