



Dr. Russell A. Nielsen

January 26, 1924 - May 12, 2020

Dr. Russell Arnold Nielsen, 96, of Cedar Falls, passed away Tuesday, May 12, due to complications of COVID-19. He was born to Albert P. Nielsen and Mathilde K. Nielsen on January 26, 1924, in Cedar Falls, Iowa. He married Wanda Louise Worden, June 17, 1950, at St. John's Episcopal Methodist Church in Davenport, Iowa.

He attended Iowa State Teachers College High School in Cedar Falls, graduating in 1941. He also attended Iowa State Teachers College (now University of Northern Iowa) before and after World War II. He was in the U.S. Navy, serving in Naval Aviation, from 1943 to 1946. Later he attended Illinois College of Optometry, receiving a B.S. degree and an O.D. degree.

Returning to Cedar Falls, he maintained an optometric practice there for 41 years. He retired in 1990 and later lived part time in Estero, Florida, and then at the Western Home Communities.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Wanda, in 2018, his mother, Mathilde, in 1935, and father, Albert, in 1967. Surviving are 3 children: Julia Wolf, Casa Grande, Arizona; Ronald Nielsen (MaryJo), Garland, Texas; and Kristin King (Richard), Brighton, Michigan; and 4 grandchildren: Shelby Swords, David (Jennifer) Nielsen, Karen Nielsen, and Kehlyn King.

No services are planned at this time. Burial in Fairview Cemetery. The family extends their thanks to all his caregivers at Western Home Communities.

Memorials may be directed to: First United Methodist Church-Cedar Falls.

Cemetery Details

Fairview Cemetery

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

Tribute Wall

WW

“ He was indeed a wonderful man, a kind and thoughtful Christian and cherished family member and relative as well as a talented, Intelligent, learned individual and a respected professional. He had an unmatched passion for living, learning, sharing, organizing and communicating. We all were appreciative of being the recipients of his steadfast interest and love of family. We are saddened for your personal loss and for the family's loss of a most special and beloved cousin. We wonder if he was cognizant of the pandemic. His insight into all matters will be missed and will continue to be an example to his offspring and to all who knew and remember him and his devotion to Wanda and all. We salute Russ! You, Ron, must now become the keeper and protector of family keepsakes, photos, and history. Please share our words with Julia, Kris, kids and everyone. Our sympathy and prayers.
Wayne and Jo Wilson & Family

Wayne and Mabel Jo Wilson - May 18, 2020 at 05:25 PM

MP

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Jim and I got to know Russ at Thalmann Square although I had known your mother years ago. He was such a sweet man, always quiet, kind and appreciative of everything that was done for him. We enjoyed seeing him sitting sound asleep with his feet propped up on his walker.

Marge Polacek

MARGE Polacek - May 15, 2020 at 11:34 AM

CE

“ We are so sorry for your loss- your dad was my “first” eye doctor as a child. So kind and patient. He was a good role model.

Cindy Willoughby Eichman - May 14, 2020 at 12:01 PM

CN

“ Dear Julie, Ron and Kristin:

We are very sorry for your loss. Your parents were absolutely wonderful in welcoming us to Cedar Falls 30 years ago. Russ wanted to make sure everything was perfect for David's transition into a well established Optometric practice. We thought he might have wanted to work a bit longer, but Florida was calling and zoom, two weeks after we arrived, your folks were outta here! They always treated us like family. They were interested in our children, we often received photos of the kids taken by your dad at various church events. We were grateful as we were not as reliable in having a camera ready.

We marveled at their continued interest in family, community events, travel and keeping fit in their retirement. They always were on the go.

Many photos documented their activities and we enjoyed viewing and listening to their stories.

We are sorry social distancing keeps us apart when we would enjoy being together to celebrate a life well lived.

Warmly,

David and Cheryl Neill

Cheryl Neill - May 13, 2020 at 09:57 PM

JA

“ Dear Ron, Julie, and Kristin,

My deepest sympathies to you on the loss of your father. Russ and Wanda extended so many kindnesses to my parents over the years, both on 9th Street and in the Western Home residences; they were great friends and neighbors. Your dad always had time to chat, and he was so tolerant of me and other neighborhood kids who used his basketball hoop endlessly on 9th Street. I'm sure it has been especially difficult for you to say goodbye to your dad in a time of COVID restrictions, but please know that he was deeply appreciated and respected by many. Joel Alter

Joel Alter - May 13, 2020 at 12:18 PM

GS

“ SPACE HERE WILL NOT ALLOW FOR ME TO SAY ALL I WANT TO CONVEY TO EACH OF YOU DURING THIS TIME OF SORROW. FIRST, I WANT TO SAY IT WAS AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF YOUR FAMILY FOR SEVERAL YEARS. SECOND, DAD HAD A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON MY LIFE AND I'M A MUCH BETTER PERSON HAVING KNOWN HIM.

I ALWAYS ENJOYED OUR TRIPS TO CENDAR FALLS TO VISIT THE FOLKS. WHILE JULIE WAS BUSY VISITING OLD FRIENDS AND MOM SPOILING SHELBY; DAD WOULD ALWAYS HAVE SEVERAL THINGS PLANNED TO KEEP ME ENTERTAINED. WE WOULD NO SOONER GET THE CAR UNLOADED AND DAD WOULD BE WANTING TO KNOW WHEN HE AND I COULD GET DOWN TO HIS OFFICE SO HE COULD EXAMINE MY EYE WHICH I HAD INJURED AS A YOUNG MAN. HE WOULD SPEND HOURS WITH ME TRYING VARIOUS CORRECTIVE LENSES, CONTACT, AND COMBINATION OF BOTH CONTACTS IN ORDER TO GET ME TO THE BEST VISION POSSIBLE. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, BEFORE WE HEADED BACK TO KANSAS I WOULD HAVE NEW LENSES ALLOWING ME TO SEE BETTER.

I PRAY THAT YOUR HEARTS WILL BE FILLED WITH THE PEACE OF GOD DURING THIS TIME AND THAT YOU'LL KNOW HE LOVES YOU FAR MORE THAN ANY WORDS CAN EXPRESS.
GARRY L. SWORDS.

GARRY L. SWORDS - May 13, 2020 at 06:15 AM



“ I remember Dr. Nielsen as a very kind man and a good doctor. Pat Colwell

Patrick Colwell - May 12, 2020 at 09:20 PM