



## Shirley Van Groningen

July 17, 1935 - July 1, 2020

Sutton resident Shirley Mae (Ham) Van Groningen, 84, passed away Wednesday, July 1, 2020, at Memorial Hospital in Aurora, NE.

Private graveside services will be conducted at the Sutton Cemetery in Sutton, NE. Visitation with a closed casket will be Sunday, July 5, 2020, from 1 p.m. - 8 p.m., at Sutton Memorial Chapel in Sutton, NE. We will follow the DHM social distancing guidelines at the visitation.

A book signing will be held Monday, July 6, 2020 - Thursday, July 9, 2020, from 8 a.m.- 5 p.m., at Zion Lutheran Church in Sutton, NE.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be directed to the family to be designated later.

Shirley Mae Ham Van Groningen was born in Saronville, NE on July 17, 1935, to parents Ernest Oliver and Blanch Ella (Higgins) Ham.

Shirley grew up on the family farm, one mile west of Saronville and attended Saronville School through Grade 8. She was a member of the Saronville Methodist Church.

Shirley graduated from Sutton High School in 1952. In high school, she was

remembered as being a kind and lively spirit. Her friend Leota Ehly recalls that at lunch-time Shirley and Leota left school to drive to Saronville in Shirley's Father's car "a big Chrysler" a good car for the time. They picked up Shirley's brother, Howard, to take him to kindergarten in Sutton. Shirley let Leota drive sometimes and Leota will never tell how fast she drove.

Leota noted that Shirley was smart about farming and learned a lot growing up on the farm.

Shirley loved growing up on the farm. She drove tractors for her father at an early age and later trucks and auger wagons on her own family farm for the men during harvest.

After high school, Shirley moved to Lincoln, where she worked at Security Mutual Life Insurance for 10 years.

Shirley's roommate Charlotte Gronewald set her up on a blind date with her boyfriend, Roger Gronewald's friend Richard E. Van Groningen. Shirley and Richard were married in Lincoln in November 1958. To this union two children were born, Jerry Lynn Van Groningen in 1961 and Judy Kay Van Groningen in 1964. In 1964, Shirley and Richard moved to Shirley's birthplace to help her father Ernest farm. In 1969, they moved to their farmstead, 2 miles north and 2 miles West of Sutton where they lived, Shirley for 51 years.

Shirley devoted her life to her family and their farm life. She excelled at cooking, baking from scratch, and canning from her well-known garden and family orchard. The apples, peaches and produce from the Orchard were made up into pies. Shirley had mastered pie crust making but still often asked her family, "Did you like the Crust?"

Shirley cherished family and holiday get-togethers as it gave her a chance to

make a Swedish Custard dish called Ostakaka. Camping, when farming allowed a break, was one of Shirley's pleasures. When Jerry and Judy were young children the family camped at Lovewell, Harlan and Pawnee Lake. The family remembers their mother's picnic meals, new friends, boating, skiing, all part of what a mothers' love can allow for.

In the last 10 years, Shirley and Richard took their camper South to visit Judy in Houston, TX for a reprieve from the Winter chill.

Shirley loved going to Sutton School sporting events, especially when her children, Jerry and Judy played on the teams.

Shirley and Richard enjoyed watching and going to Husker football, basketball, baseball and volleyball.

Shirley made quilts, with many given as gifts to newborns, friends and family.

She was involved with her Zion Lutheran Church both in Saronville and Sutton. At the annual soup feed, people looked forward to her homemade pies.

Shirley was a hard-working woman with common sense and a practical approach to life. She was also blessed by the Spirit of Generosity, Kindness, Giving and a capacity for Love and Graciousness.

Shirley is survived by husband, Richard Van Groningen of Sutton, NE; son, Jerry Van Groningen of Sutton, NE; daughter, Judy Van Groningen of Houston, TX; and sister, Bona Jean Driewer of Aurora, NE.

Shirley was preceded in death by father, Earnest O. Ham; mother, Blanch E.

(Higgins) Ham; sister, Patsy Hemje; and brother, Howard Ham.

Shirley was deeply loved by her family and will be missed by family and friends.

# Tribute Wall

BH

“ Rich ,Jerry ,& Judy, So sorry to hear about Shirley. Keeping you all in our prayers.

Bill & Marlys Hayes - July 06, 2020 at 07:03 PM

LG

“ Rich I'm so sorry to hear your wife passed she sounds like a wonderful person. My heart goes out to you and your family.

Laura Grubbs - July 06, 2020 at 07:41 AM

MC

“ My deepest sympathies and prayers to the Van Groningen family. Shirley was a strong, kind, beautiful and generous woman who will be greatly missed and whose legacy will continue to live on through her family. May the Lord bless you always.  
All my love,  
Mona

Mona Cantrell - July 06, 2020 at 07:02 AM

MR

“ Jerry & Judy,  
My thoughts & prayers are with the both of you and your father. Wish I were there to give you both support. I know the community of Sutton will miss her also.  
Sincerely,  
Mike Rath

Michael Rath - July 05, 2020 at 09:52 PM

TB

“ I enjoyed reading such a wonderfully detailed description of you mom, her life and the impact she made. Such a master in the kitchen and in the garden! I know y'all will miss her deeply and her pies. Love to you and your dad and brother.  
Love, Tiffani and Stephen

---

**Tiffani Bailiff** - July 05, 2020 at 11:42 AM

SA

“ What a loss. I loved hearing stories my dad used to tell about working for Ernie and how Shirley was such a hard worker and the jokes they used to play. She was so beautiful and will be missed. My thoughts and prayers to you all.

---

**Sharon Anderson** - July 05, 2020 at 10:04 AM

RM

“ I was sorry to hear of Shirley's passing. She was a very kind and caring person. We were neighbors when you lived in Lincoln and Shirley babysat for Randy. I wish we had kept in touch over the years. My sympathy to the family.

---

**Ruth Ann (Wertz) Miller** - July 05, 2020 at 10:02 AM

SD

“ Thoughts and prayers to all at this most difficult time. Aunt Shirley will be missed but not forgotten. Take comfort in the knowledge that she is with her Father in Heaven and that we will all see her again some day.  
Love,  
Steven and Shari

---

**Steven and Shari Driewer** - July 05, 2020 at 07:18 AM

TH

“ JK, I'm sending my condolences to you & you family. Your mom was so blessed to have a loving family. I know your devotion & care must was a blessing to your dear mother. I'm sending prayers for God's comfort at this time of loss.

Love in Christ,  
Tina

---

**Tina Harrington** - July 04, 2020 at 04:32 PM

HH

“ We just found out about Shirley's passing. Sending prayers and condolences to the family.  
We have fond memories of Shirley, she was a great friend and taught me how to make one of her delicious cherry pie. She will be missed.

"The Huber's"

---

**Hilly and Doris Huber** - July 04, 2020 at 03:41 PM

JG

“ One of my favorite memories of Shirley was her April fools joke played on me at PT. Such a caring, fun soul. She will be missed by many, as she loved well. Prayers for your family.

Jarod and Jolene Griess

---

**Jolene Griess** - July 04, 2020 at 12:28 PM

JN

“ We loved her so much!! We mourn her loss and look forward to seeing her again in Paradise!

---

**Judy and Larry Nuss** - July 04, 2020 at 11:53 AM

TF

“ JK and family, I am so sorry for your loss. May you find comfort in knowing that she is home and one day you will be reunited.  
All our love,  
Tony, Becky and family.

---

**The Tillman family** - July 04, 2020 at 08:15 AM

AC

“ So sorry to all of you for the loss of such a beautiful person!! Shirley will be SO missed. Cherish the time you had with her and now all the memories you have to carry with you. Hugs to you all. Love,  
Alicia

---

**Alicia Codute** - July 04, 2020 at 07:49 AM

KW

“ Richard, My condolences to you and your family. Shirley was such a great lady and I know will be missed terribly.

---

**Ken Wells** - July 04, 2020 at 05:56 AM

PH

“ She was a kind and lovely lady. May she Rest In Peace.

---

**Patti Hust** - July 04, 2020 at 04:57 AM

BB

“ So sorry to hear of Shirley's passing.  
Sending our deepest sympathy to your family.

---

**Barb bailey** - July 03, 2020 at 08:38 PM

WK

“ I am so sorry to hear about your loss. I will always remember Shirley carving pumpkins with Randa and Jake when they were little. She also made a dress out of money for Randa as a wedding gift. The memories we share are too many to mention... We know that she is in a better place and we will not forget the great things she did for others throughout her life. Keep your memories close to your heart. May God Bless you all during this difficult time.

With Love,  
The Kesslers

---

Wendi Kessler - July 03, 2020 at 08:04 PM