

## Merle Louis Kopren

Former Perkins County rancher Merle Kopren, of Sturgis, SD, passed away on Thursday, August 11, 2016, at Sturgis Regional Hospital at the age of 86.

Merle Louis Kopren was born June 9, 1930, in Lemmon, SD, to Louis and Martha Kopren. He grew up on the family farm/ranch south of Bison along with his brothers, Norman and Dean, and sisters, Della and Cleo. His love for livestock and farming was nurtured during this time and his interest in these areas stayed with him throughout his life.

Merle attended grade school in the Bison area. He obtained his G.E.D. while serving in the United States Air Force, from 1951 until his honorable discharge in 1956. He learned the trade of welding during his time of service. While serving in the Air Force, he married the love of his life, Jean John on May 29, 1954, at Homme Lutheran Church in Prairie City. They made their first home in an 18 foot trailer house in Wichita, KS. Merle and Jean just celebrated their 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary and had enjoyed a lifetime of friendship, good spirited ribbing, and their share of hardships and blessings. They were great role models for their children and grandchildren of what love and devotion in a marriage should look like. After Merle's discharge from the Air Force, he and Jean made their home south of Bison on Merle's parent's ranch. Later, they purchased their own ranch/farm 16 miles south of Prairie City where they raised sheep, cattle, crops, and 4 children. In 1996, Merle and Jean moved to Sturgis and made their home. They lived surrounded by friends and family and enjoyed many nights of card playing and socializing.

Merle worked hard but also enjoyed life to its fullest. He enjoyed numerous trips hunting and fishing with his buddies and was a charter member of the Raccoon Lodge #2. Merle loved to visit with family, friends and neighbors, both on the ranch and after his move to Sturgis. After his retirement to Sturgis, his heart continued to be on the Fishhook Ranch and he often called nightly to check on his "boys."

Merle was a member of the Grace Lutheran Church, NAJA, and West River Shrine. He served on various boards including: NF Lyon Trust Fund, Farm Credit, Bison School Board, and Antelope Township. He served as Homme Lutheran Church treasurer and District Master of the Grand Lodge of SD. Merle received his 60-year pin from the Pasque Lodge #214 in Bison last year.

Merle's generosity and kindness will continue to be an inspiration to his family. His strength and courage during his tough times of illness were evidence of his strong faith. He rebounded time after time, working hard and following Jean's orders to get better so he could get back home. He loved his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and he was so proud of his family and enjoyed every minute he could spend with them.

Merle leaves behind his loving wife, Jean; four children, Merlene (Dale) Palczewski, Reeder, ND, Willis (Cindy) Kopren, Prairie City, SD, Debra (Terry) McPherson, Piedmont, SD, and Ross (Beverly) Kopren, Prairie City, SD; grandchildren include, Nathan (Lynae) Palczewski, John (Tessa) Palczewski, Wade (Jenny) Kopren, Randy (Heidi) Kopren, Michael, Misty, and Marty McPherson, Kyle (Amanda) Kopren, and Lane and Tessa Kopren. Merle also had 10 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, Norman Kopren; sister, Cleo (Wally) Miller; sister-in-law, Darlyne Kopren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Merle was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Dean; sister and brother-in-law, John and Della Dreis; sister-in-law, Gen Kopren; nephews, Mark and Tim Dreis; and great-grandson, Ray Kopren.

Memorials have been established to the Grace Lutheran Church Radio Broadcast fund and the West River Shrine Club NF Lyon Trust fund.

Condolences may be sent to the family at [www.kinkadefunerals.com](http://www.kinkadefunerals.com).

*The family would like to invite you to join them for fellowship and lunch following the service in the Son Shine room in the church basement. We thank you for your presence and condolences.*

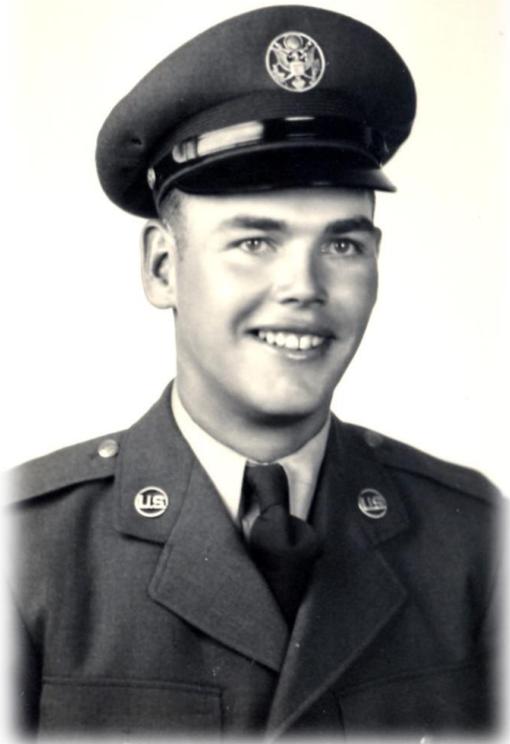
## *In Loving Memory Of*



*Merle Louis Kopren*

*1930 ~ 2016*





### ***A Million Times***

*A million times we've needed you,  
A million times we've cried,  
If our love could have saved you,  
You never would have died.  
It broke our hearts to lose you,  
But you did not go alone,  
For part of us went with you,  
The day God called you home.  
He saw you were getting tired,  
When a recovery was not to be,  
He closed His arms around you,  
And whispered "Come to Me."  
For all the pain you went through,  
He saw you needed rest,  
God's garden must be beautiful,  
For he only picks the best.*

*In Loving Memory Of*

## ***Merle Louis Kopren***

### ***Born***

June 9, 1930  
Lemmon, South Dakota

### ***Died***

August 11, 2016  
Sturgis, South Dakota

### ***Memorial Service***

Friday, August 19, 2016, at 11:00 a.m.  
Grace Lutheran Church  
Sturgis, South Dakota

### ***Officiant***

Pastor Willard Olsen

### ***Musicians***

Marlene Kotab ~ Danny Chapman

### ***Musical Selections***

"Grandpa, Tell Me About The Good Old Days"  
"The Lord's Prayer"                      "In The Garden"

### ***Honorary Pallbearers***

All Grandchildren

### ***Inurnment***

Black Hills National Cemetery  
Sturgis, South Dakota

