

Celebrating
THE LIFE OF

Karen Patricia Taylor

August 2, 1937 - August 12, 2026

Visitation

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 18, 2026
Caldwell Parrish Funeral Home - Perry Chapel

Memorial Service

10:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 19, 2026
Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church - Perry, Iowa

Officiating Clergy

Pastor Kimberly Belken

Organist

Linda Huntington

Selected Hymns

"Morning Has Broken" - "Borning Cry"
"Children of the Heavenly Father"

Final Resting Place

Iowa Veteran Cemetery - Adel, Iowa

Directly following the service, everyone is invited
to the La Poste, 1219 Warford St, Perry, Iowa,
for a time of fellowship and lunch.


CALDWELL PARRISH
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY
PERRY CHAPEL



In Loving
MEMORY

Karen Patricia Taylor

August 2, 1937 - August 12, 2026

Karen Patricia (Nelson) Taylor, 89, long-time resident of the Minburn, Iowa area died Wednesday, August 12 at Spurgeon Manor in Dallas Center where she had resided since February 2025.

Karen is survived by Larry, her husband of 67 years and their five children: Dan (Ila Jean), Deb (Dean) Irving, Steve, Ann (Mike Gaul), and Patricia; nine grandchildren: Todd, Noah (Sarah), Hannah (Taylor), Emily (Miguel), Kathryn (Zach), Eric (Courtney), Adam, Elizabeth (Sergio) and Eleanor; and 12 great-grandchildren: Aileah, Camila, Quinn, Charlee, Brantley, Lane, Eli, Everleigh, Slater, Mazie, Millie and Merritt. She is also survived by brothers John and Bill, sister Linda, sister-in-law Doris Waite, cousin Melinda Anderson Schauer, many nieces and nephews, extended family, neighbors and friends.

Karen was born on August 2, 1937, at the hospital in Dexter, Iowa, the oldest of Ransome and Helen (Anderson) Nelson's six children. She spent her first few years on the family's small farm north of Earlham, which included about 50 acres of timber that later became a gathering place for the extended family to roast hot dogs and marshmallows, hunt morels and explore the woods and nearby creek. Before Karen started school, the family, then grown to include brothers Jim and John and sister Helen Ann, moved to a farm near Bouton, just down the road from Lake Robbins Ballroom. Karen began her education a few miles away at Gardiner School with just a handful of classmates. After 8th grade, she attended Perry High School, graduating class salutatorian in 1956, working as a car hop at the local A & W alongside her sister Helen Ann and participating in chorus, Y-Teens, drama, speech, National Honor Society, yearbook and newspaper staff. She was a 9-year-old member of the Beaver Blue Bells and also joined the Beaver Jr. Farmers just so she could show her baby beef projects. Karen's work in 4-H led to many county and state awards including trips to Kansas City and Chicago. It even connected her to her future husband Larry, as they met at the Dallas County fair. They married in 1959 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Perry. A woman ahead of her time, she graduated from Iowa State University in 1960 with a BS in textiles and clothing while raising one baby (Dan) and expecting another (Deb).

Karen and Larry began farming three miles north of Minburn on the west side of Highway 169. In 1963, they exchanged farms with Larry's parents, D.W. (Pat) & Darline, in Washington Township and lived there until 2020, when they moved back to the original farmstead. Over 65 years of active farming, the family raised corn, soybeans, oats, alfalfa, cattle, hogs, sheep, and chickens. Karen grew a large garden each year and made the most of the apple, pear, and plum trees in the orchard. She and Larry invested in planting windbreaks on their farms and received a conservation award from the local Soil and Water Conservation District in 2001. Up until the last few years of their farming career, Karen kept the books and prepared the taxes for the farm operation.

Karen served her community in a great many ways: 4-H club leader, county fair judge, county fair superintendent and Sunday school teacher as well as member of the Central Dallas school board, the Minburn telephone board, ADM School District Scholarship Foundation, Living History Farms Guild, Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church altar guild and women's bible study.

Her community also included the C-Mon Club, a group of local women who met monthly from 1964 to 2024. With a life-long interest in textiles, she was a charter member of the Perry Piecemakers quilt group, which encouraged her to create with fabric for art's sake rather than the necessity of constructing or mending clothes for a family of seven. Karen and Larry also socialized at the Elks Club and during group trips to Kansas City, Acapulco and Hawaii through the Minburn co-op and Elks Club. In later years, they visited Australia and took an annual car trip during the winter throughout the southern U.S. with no particular route or schedule. Karen traveled twice to Sweden with Nelson & Anderson family members, exploring the country of their ancestors and connecting with distant relatives.

For many decades Karen kept up her Christmastime tradition of gifting Swedish tea rings for as many as 45 family members, neighbors, school staff and friends. Starting sometime after Thanksgiving, she mixed batches of dough by hand, measuring flour from a battered tin canister that held a 25 lb. bag. The rings of dough were formed and baked on special round pans only used at that time of year. After baking, she wrapped them tightly and stacked them in the upright freezer. Several days before Christmas, Karen thawed each one, decorated it with frosting and slivers of red maraschino cherries, secured with plastic wrap and a twist-tie, then finished with just a bit of curling ribbon and a gift tag. She entrusted her kids to carefully carry several onto a bus full of staring kids before handing them over to grateful teachers and bus drivers. The remainder covered the seat and floor of Larry's pick up as he crisscrossed Dallas County, delivering the rest.

Until the last few months of her life, Karen was a great reader of books, magazines and newspapers. She was continuously striving to educate herself, taking extension courses in commodity marketing, women's landownership, conservation, tax preparation and estate planning. For more informal self-education, Karen compulsively clipped newspaper and magazine articles with interesting-to-her facts, appealing recipes, stories of famous Iowans, obituaries of people she knew or relatives of people she knew, clever sewing and quilting techniques, ways to save money or time or energy, gardening tips, certain kinds of antiques or collectibles, artists or writers she admired, origins of interesting words, Lutheran church history, Iowa history, and quotes that spoke to her about her purpose and place in the world.



Karen's service will be livestreamed and may be viewed through her obituary page on the Caldwell Parrish Funeral Home website.

Memorials may be directed to the Iowa 4-H Foundation (please direct it towards Dallas County); the Iowa State University William and Ransome Nelson Scholarship in meteorology; the Helen (Anderson) Nelson Scholarship at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois; Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church; Spurgeon Manor or the Perry Piecemakers Quilts of Valor project. The family is grateful for the compassionate and helpful staff at Spurgeon Manor and EveryStep Hospice.