

*In Loving Memory Of*  
**Phyllis Jean Eschenbaum**

February 6, 1924  
Redfield, South Dakota

May 22, 2026  
Faulkton, South Dakota

The LORD is my *Shepherd;*  
I shall not want.  
He maketh me  
lie down in green pastures:  
He leadeth me beside the still waters,  
He restoreth my  
*soul:*

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness  
for His name's sake. Yea though I walk through the  
valley of the shadow of death.

*I will fear no evil:*  
*for Thou art with me;*  
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies  
Thou anointest my head with oil; My cup runneth over  
Surely goodness & mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house  
of the LORD *forever.*  
- Psalm 23

**MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL:**

10:30 a.m., Wednesday, June 10, 2026

St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
Orient, South Dakota

**OFFICIATING:**

Fr. Brian Eckrich

**LECTOR:**

Mary Schlechter

**MASS SERVERS:**

Rob and Anna Martinmaas

**CASKET BEARERS & PLACING OF PALL:**

Ben Aesoph, Terry Aesoph, JoAnn Aesoph,  
Sandy Aesoph, Staci Aesoph, and Mary Schlechter

**PIANIST:**

Carol Esser

**VOCALIST:**

Trixie Schlechter

**HYMNS:**

"Amazing Grace" "Be Not Afraid" "On Eagle's Wings"  
"Song of Farewell" "Go Rest High on That Mountain"

**INTERMENT:**

Eschenbaum Family Cemetery  
Rural Orient, South Dakota



Faulkton, South Dakota  
[www.familyfuneralhome.net](http://www.familyfuneralhome.net)

**Phyllis (Kroning) Eschenbaum** was born February 6, 1924, in Redfield, SD, to Harry and Nellie (Alley) Kroning. Harry owned a tire shop in Redfield before marrying Nellie and moving to the family farm in Wheaton Township. Nellie also helped raise her niece, Marianna, after the death of Marianna's mother. Phyllis grew up alongside her and always considered her a sister.

Phyllis endured many hardships throughout her early life. Her brothers, Alan and William, both contracted polio and passed away while in iron lungs in Huron. Her youngest brother, Robert, passed away earlier this year following a fall while walking on a trail.

When Phyllis was six years old, the family moved to North Dakota for a year to work on a relative's farm. She remembered the winters as cold and dark. The family later returned to South Dakota by horse-drawn wagon, settling first near Polo at the Sam Alley farm before moving several times throughout the area during the difficult Depression and Dust Bowl years.

Phyllis recalled placing wet newspapers on windowsills to keep dust from blowing into the house. Her father worked on road construction crews building the "Moonshine" highway and later hauled gravel with a horse team to help complete the road. Like many families during the Depression, they survived on government food and clothing assistance. The women worked in sewing rooms or cooked in schools for extra income. Phyllis remembered cutting thistles with a horse team to feed the cattle when grass was scarce and recalled the heartbreak of watching government officials take cattle away because there was no feed left for them.

She attended country school through the eighth grade and later moved into Ree Heights during the week to attend high school, living with various families in exchange for doing chores. As the oldest child, she spent weekends helping on the family farm and rarely participated in school activities.

After graduating from high school at age 18, Phyllis attended Northern State Teachers College in Aberdeen to earn her teaching certificate. She worked in homes for room and board and held weekend jobs to support herself. After one year and a summer session, the government's need for teachers allowed her to begin teaching in Harrison Township at the Stauffer one-room schoolhouse. She lived with Eddie and Hilda Stauffer and walked each day to the school located south of the Eschenbaum homestead. Among her students were Roger and Lester Eschenbaum, Joyce and Jeanette Stauffer, and Orvil Hynek.

During that time, she met Roger and Lester's brother, Marvin Eschenbaum. The couple was married November 7, 1944, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Orient. They began married life in the Conway house east of the family homestead, where they lived without electricity or running water, using kerosene lanterns and carrying water from a well. Before the birth of their daughter Sharon in 1947, they moved to the Alex Mitchell farm west of Orient. Their daughter Connie was born in 1950. In 1963, Marvin and Phyllis purchased the Eschenbaum home place from his mother, Helen Keppen Eschenbaum.

Phyllis devoted her life to her family and the farm. She was a hardworking farm wife who raised children, tended gardens, cooked meals, washed clothes, and worked alongside Marvin in the fields while also helping care for cattle, sheep, chickens, geese, and pigs.

The Kroning family was known for being very conservative, and Phyllis' brother Robert often joked about how surprised they were when they met the lively Eschenbaum family — "they even danced." The Eschenbaum's became known for their humor and playful spirit.

Grateful for having shared her life are her daughters, Connie Eschenbaum and Sharon (John) Conley; grandchildren, Erin Conley and Johnny (Shanon) Conley; and great-grandson, Scott Conley.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Marvin; her parents, Harry and Nellie Kroning; her brothers, Alan, William, and Robert; and many extended family members and friends.

Memorials in Phyllis' honor may be directed to the Orient Community Club, c/o Joann Aesoph, PO Box 15, Orient, SD 57467.

