

Close the Gate

By Nancy Kraayenhof

For this one farmer the worries are over,
lie down and rest your head,
Your time has been and struggles enough,
put the tractor in the shed.

Years were not easy, many downright hard,
but your faith in God transcended,
Put away your tools and sleep in peace.
The fences have all been mended.

You raised a fine family, worked the land well
and always followed the Son,
Hang up your shovel inside of the barn;
your work here on earth is done.

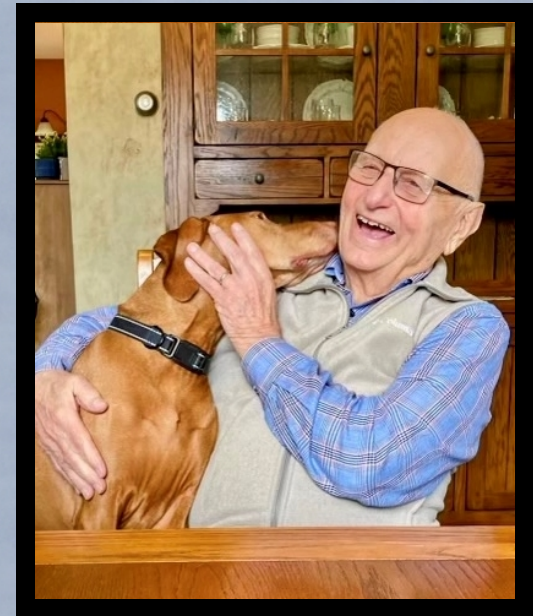
A faith few possess led your journey through life,
often a jagged and stony way,
The sun is setting, the cattle are all bedded,
and here now is the end of your day.

Your love of God's soil has passed on to your kin;
the stories flow like fine wine,
Wash off your work boots in the puddle left
by blessed rain one final time.

You always believed that the good Lord would
provide and He always had somehow,
Take off your gloves and put them down,
no more sweat and worry for you now.

Your labor is done, your home now is heaven;
no more must you wait,
Your legacy lives on, your love of the land,
and we will close the gate.

Arrangements Entrusted To
Reck Funeral Home - Miller, South Dakota
www.familyfuneralhome.net



Celebrating THE *Life* OF

Richard L. Cotton

August 20, 1935 - October 21, 2024



Richard Cotton, 89, of Miller and formerly of St. Lawrence, peacefully passed away Monday, October 21, 2024, at Highmore Health surrounded by his family.

Richard Lowell (Richie) Cotton was born August 20, 1935, to Henry Wales and Inez Mary (Harris) Cotton at the Miller Hospital. He joined siblings Donald (Donnie) and Maxine (Mac), and Howard (Hum). The tag-alongs, Ardith (Ardie) and Thomas (Tommy Joe) came later and were Richie's biggest fans. The family lived on various farms in Hand County. In 1936 they moved to Oregon. Within a year the family returned to Hand County on a farm near Vayland, SD. When Richard was 7 years old the family moved once more to a farm East of St. Lawrence where Richard lived for over 70 years. Richard attended grade school and high school in St. Lawrence, graduating with the class of 1954. Education was important to Rich - - he was so proud that all five children graduated with high honors from college. When he was a Junior in high school he met the love of his life, Ellie Mae Testerman. They were married on September 9, 1956, in St. Lawrence. To this union five children were born, the five little "Cottontails".

Richie's working life revolved around farming and ranching on the family farm, first partnering with his Dad, and later on his own with the help of his family. He raised cattle, pigs, sheep and once in a while, chickens, turkeys, and even a peacock! In addition to farming and ranching, Rich was a substitute mail carrier for 21 years, a school board member for both the St. Lawrence and Miller School Districts, a member of various farm organizations such as NFO, Farmers Union, and Pork Producers. Religion was also a big part of Richard's life. He was a very faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ where he served in both district and local leadership positions. He was so delighted to have a beautiful little chapel in Miller!

Family meant the world to Richie. He was very close to his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren as well as his siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles. Many happy memories of family sustained him and gave him reason to smile and laugh. Rich loved to travel with Ellie and together they enjoyed trips to both coasts several times, as well as enjoying trips to Alaska, Canada, the Yukon, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Mexico and even Russia! But . . . his favorite trips of all were to the Black Hills with Ellie.

Richard is survived by his wife of 68 years, Ella Mae (Testerman), and his children Gregory Mark (Erick Wolfmeyer) Cotton, Tamara Lea (Ray) Caffee, Jodean LaRae (Shannon) Speck, Michele Lynne (Alan) Wieseler, and Clark Jeremy (Adrienne Zeller) Cotton, his fourteen grandchildren Naomi (Jon Isaac) Caffee, Vance (Jennie) Caffee, Jay (Tandra) Welk, Jennifer (Nathan) Thyen, Hannah Caffee, Olivia (Joshua) Randall, Evan (Shelby) Wieseler, Eleanor (Jon Salisbury) Cotton, Sylvia (Colin) Johnson, Elizabeth (Trent) Steptoe, Joseph (Erica) Wieseler, Ian Speck, Eric Speck, and Samuel Cotton. Great grandchildren Paul, Marie and Joel Randall; Nolan, Ivan, Logan, and Rhys Caffee; Ellie, Millie, and Asher Welk; Vaelynn Welk, Averie, Weston, and Clara Thyen; Miles and Mabel Steptoe; Leo and Rudy Wieseler; and Ledger Johnson. Richard is survived by his siblings Ardith (Gil) Bristlin and Thomas (Donna) Cotton, sisters-in-law Inez Cotton, Aloa Carter, Carolyn Testerman, and brother-in-law Philip (Phyllis) Testerman and numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

Richard was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Donald and Howard and his sister Maxine (Ted) Lamm and infant sister Joan Cotton, his father-in-law and mother-in-law Freel and Orena Testerman, as well as his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law Allen (Eva) Testerman, Russell (Berniece) Testerman, Marion (Bill) Sears, Donald Testerman, Roger Carter, and Duke Testerman.

Celebration of Richard's Life

11:00 a.m., Saturday, October 26, 2024

First Presbyterian Church

Miller, South Dakota

ORDER OF SERVICE

Procession of the family

Prayer: Pastor Robert Brooks

Congregational Hymn: "Come Come Ye Saints"

Scripture: Psalm 23

Congregational Hymn: "I'll Fly Away"

Remarks: Greg Cotton & Tammy Caffee

Congregational Hymn: "Secret Prayer"

Remarks: Jody Speck & Shelly Wieseler

Special Music: "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"
(*Grandchildren*)

Remarks: Clark Cotton

Congregational Hymn: "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel"

Announcements

Prayer: David Finger

Recessional

The family warmly invites you to join them for lunch and continued fellowship immediately following the service.