

Dan Nelson, 59

Nov. 2, 1950 - Sept. 15, 2010

HARLAN — Daniel Dean Nelson, Dan to his friends, Danny to his family, was born November 2, 1950, the first of five children born to Gailard and Margie (Beckman) Nelson. Born in Harlan, raised on a farm outside Harlan, Dan graduated from HCHS in 1969. His reservation in heaven was secured on February 2, 1970, when he accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour.

Not many people find their soul-mate, the love of their life at age 15, but that is when Dan met Sandy Fischer. The first time he asked her for a date he said, "I don't have my driver's license yet, so could your mom bring you to the church for our roller skating activity?" Their love blossomed from that day and they were married July 30, 1971. They were blessed with four wonderful children, Corey Daniel, Carrie Diane, Cayley Darice, and Cassie Denae. After Dan graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO, in 1974, they lived in West Des Moines where Dan pastored Valley Junction Baptist Church for six years. After living in Denver for four years, the family returned to Harlan in 1984 as Dan joined his father-in-law, Earl Fischer, in the cemetery lettering business. Dan loved his work and took pride in providing quality service and professional work. For 20 years Dan was active at First Baptist Church in Elk Horn, serving as deacon and choir director. In addition to his devotion for God and family, Dan loved Southern Gospel music and John Deere tractors. Dan and Sandy travelled all over the Midwest to attend Southern Gospel concerts. Their highlight week for the past 10 years was attending the National Quartet Convention in Louisville, KY. Dan enjoyed collecting anything John Deere, including several 2-cylinder tractors. He proudly drove them in parades and tractor rides. His favorite saying was, "trucks are red, tractors are green." Dan loved being a dad and grandpa. He led by example as he taught them to love God and encouraged them to lead lives of high moral character. His kind, gentle spirit guided them to be respectful to authority and compassionate to the less fortunate. A tender heart allowed his tears to flow easily, showing them that being a man includes emotions, as well as integrity, consistency, determination and honesty. He would do anything he could to help anyone in need. As a husband, no one could compare. He often surprised Sandy with unique, imaginative, and generous expressions of his love. His passionate love for her was so great that her co-workers wanted him to give their husbands classes on how to be a loving and devoted husband. After a valiant 15 month battle with pancreatic cancer, fought on his terms, Dan's earthly life ended on September 15, 2010, at his home, surrounded by his loving family, at the age of 59 years, 10 months and 13 days. His eternal life began at that time, and he is now in "The Land of the Living."

Preceding him were his grandparents and infant brother. Those left to cherish his memory are his loving and devoted wife of 39 years, Sandy Nelson of Harlan; four children, Corey (Amie) Nelson and Anna, Ellerie, Cade, and Brie of Harlan, Carrie (Kevin) Petersen and Kendall, Kyle, Noah, and Ella of Elk Horn, Cayley (Mike) Poggensee and Lucy, of Harlan, and Cassie (John) Stiles and Isabelle of Minneapolis, MN; his parents, Gailard and Margie Nelson of Littleton, CO; three siblings, Kathy (Steve) Reisner of Pomona, CA, Lynn (Stephanie) Nelson of Morrison, CO and Nancy (Mike) Watkins of Antigua, Guatemala; parents-in-law, Earl and Helen Fischer of Harlan; sister-in-law, Karla (Mike) Dillard of Solon; and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, September 18, 2010, at Grace Baptist Church in Harlan, with Pastor Mike Marcum and Pastor Joe Pennington officiating. Eulogist was Hospice Chaplin Frank Fast. Musicians were Kim Mossman, Steve Reischl and Shon Andersen with musical selections, "I Can Only Imagine" and "I Will Rise". Congregational hymns were "How Great Thou Art", "It is Well", and "I'll Fly Away". Honorary pall bearers were Norm Nelsen, Kendall Petersen, and Kyle Petersen. Pall bearers were David Beckman, Denny Beckman, Jason Nelson, Chris Nelson, Tom Christensen, and Don Hoover. Interment was in the Harlan Cemetery.



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