

In Loving Memory Of
Irene Keffeler Long

Born

December 13, 1931

Passed Away

February 11, 2025

Mass of Christian Burial

Monday, March 3, 2025 at 11:00am
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiant

Father Leo Hausmann

Musicians

Myron Volk Barry Furze

Musical Selections

“Green, Green Grass of Home”

“How Great Thou Art” “Gift of Finest Wheat”
“Ava Maria” “On Eagles Wings”

Pallbearers

Brooke Uherka	Tiffany Skavang
Jay Long	Jeff Long
Justin Long	John Long
Lyle Long Jr.	Josh Long
Michael Bridgewater	Bailey Long

Honorary Pallbearers

Murrin Keffeler	Raymond Howie	Rose Marie VanSickle
Mabel McPherson	San Monahan	

Final Resting Place

Black Hills National Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota

In Loving Memory



Irene Keffeler Long

December 13, 1931 ~ February 11, 2025

Irene Keffeler Long was born December 13, 1931 to John and Mary (Grubl) Keffeler. She grew up on a farm/ranch on the Alkali Divide near Sturgis SD. As a young girl, Irene worked alongside her many siblings shocking grain crops for their dad as well as the other daily farm chores.

Irene attended grade school in a one room schoolhouse in Alkali then high school in Sturgis at St. Martin's Academy graduating in 1949. She completed one quarter at Black Hills State College. She then got a job at McMahon Co. Elevator in Sturgis as a bookkeeper and clerk.

Along the way she met Benny Long who challenged her spunk with some spunk of his own. They both loved to tease and pull pranks and seemed well matched! He once filled her "Dance Card" almost completely with his own signature. And oh how they loved to dance! They married in 1951 in the Bear Butte Catholic Parish House. Their first home was in Piedmont SD where he worked on the Harrington Ranch until Benny was drafted. He joined the Marines and they moved to Oceanside, CA where he was stationed until he was shipped out for duty to Korea in 1953. When he returned in 1954 they moved to White Owl, later to Union Center. In 1958 they purchased the Kemp Gentry place near Red Owl, SD. Irene enjoyed ranch work, raised chickens, milked cows (by hand), sewed, crocheted and had a garden. Benny suddenly passed away in 1974 leaving her a widow at the age of 42.

She moved to Sturgis in 1979 and got a job as a clerk/bookkeeper for Western Ranch Outfitters, later called Walco, but on her resume she wrote clerk/bookkeeper, custodian, shelf-stocker, and packed orders for shipping. She never sat idle and was always looking for something to do.

In 1976 Irene became a Grandmother for the first time and from then on she wore that title like a badge of honor becoming the grandmother of 11 Grandchildren, 35 Great grandchildren, and 1 Great Great grandchild. She used to say when a new grandchild was born that she was like a mother hen spreading her wings a little wider to tuck them all underneath. Irene made each of her children and grandchildren an afghan and the great grands each a baby afghan. She once wrote that she's enjoyed watching the grandkids in all of their activities ranging from football, rodeo, wrestling, tennis, track meets, ballet recitals, piano recitals, and Christmas plays. She kept scrapbooks of newspaper clippings of every event they were in.

Irene's final job before retiring at the age of 85 years young was for Tom's Tees. This was her dream job first of all because the owner and his family became part of her family. She loved to visit all day with the folks who came

from far and wide. She loved telling the story about her boss Tom Monahan and how he designed the logo for the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and then gifted it to the City of Sturgis. She also enjoyed any chance she got to boast about her precious grandchildren. Her unwavering kindness was felt by all who had the pleasure of meeting her.

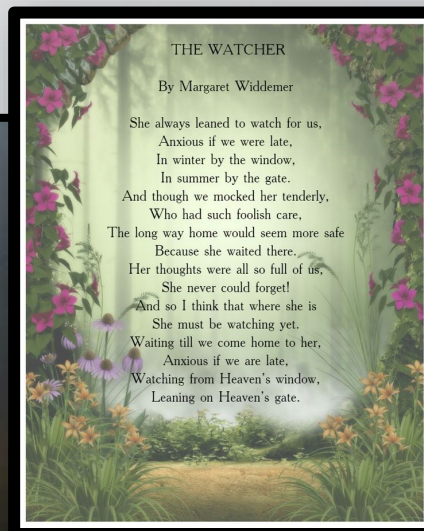
In 2014 Irene was named Sturgis Chamber of Commerce Employee of the Year after being nominated by San Monahan her dear friend and boss. She was ever so proud as he read her many accomplishments and wonderful stories that his customers had written about her.

Irene passed away February 11, 2025 at the Good Samaritan Nursing Home in New Underwood, SD. Grateful for sharing her life, her survivors include her children, Kathy Bridgewater, Lakewood, CO, John (Dede) Long, Red Owl, SD, Glen (Janet) Long, and Lyle (Cindy) Long, both of Enning SD. Grandchildren, Michael Bridgewater, Jay, Jeff, Justin Long, Brooke Long Uherka, Bailey Long, John B., Lyle Jr., Josh Long, and Tiffany Long Skavang along with 35 great grandchildren and one great-great grandson, siblings Mabel McPherson, Rose Marie VanSickel and Murrin Keffeler.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Benny, her grandson, Benjamin (Benny), siblings Laura May, Bernice Hanks, Charles "Bud" Keffeler, Mae Dingeman, Art Keffeler, Maurice Keffeler, Marian Clinch, and Ralph Keffeler.

The family would like to thank the staff at the Good Samaritan Home in New Underwood for their kind and loving care of Irene during her stay.

A memorial has been established to the Red Owl Fire Department and the H & M Arena.



Thank you for your presence and condolences.