

Stanley Emil Martens was born in Wessington, South Dakota, at the Wessington Hospital/Drake Hotel on August 17, 1923, to Emil and Martha (Moller) Martens. Stan spent his first eleven years on a farm north of Wessington. When Stan was eleven, his father hitched the hay wagon full of household goods and told Stan to drive it to their new place, five miles south and three miles west of Wessington. It was in this area that he would reside for the next seventy years.

After graduating from Wessington High School, Stan farmed with his father until he met and married his wife, Mary Louise Thompson. Stan and Mary Lou were married on July 18, 1948. To this union, three sons were born: Stephen, Robert, and Scott. Stan and Mary Lou purchased the Tom Tucker ranch, seven miles south and two miles west of Wessington, and moved to their home on that windblown hill. On September 11, 1978, Mary Lou passed from this vale of tears.



Stanley was a cattleman more than a farmer, so when the time was right, he sold his dairy cattle, planted his land to hay, and started to live his lifelong passion of ranching. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge for 70 years, advancing through the stations of the Lodge and using the lessons he learned there in his everyday life. Active in the First Presbyterian Church of Wessington, he served as a trustee, a deacon and as a member of many committees. Stan, with help from Donna Noyes and many others, worked hard to see a new Presbyterian Church built in Wessington.

Stan was active in the Solo Parent organization and was named National Solo Father of the Year in 1986. He traveled the world, saw many countries, and made many friends along the way. He said that his favorite trip was the African safari.

Stanley is survived by his three sons, Stephen Martens of Huron (and special friend Pamela Young); Robert Martens of Brooklyn Center, MN; and Scott (Mary Haeder) Martens of Watertown, SD; as well as 11 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchild (and one on the way); Honorary Son and Daughter, Gibb and Stephanie Rodgers of Wessington; and a host of friends and relatives.

Stanley was preceded in death by his parents, Emil and Martha Martens; his wife, Mary Louise (Thompson) Martens; his sister and brother-in-law, Dorothy (Martens) and David Gilliland; a niece, Marilyn (Gilliland) Legg; a niece Dorothy Jean Gilliland, a nephew, Alan Gilliland; a daughter-in-law, LaVilla Martens; his special friend and companion for many years, Joan Hull; most of his cousins and many of his friends.



Stanley E. Martens

August 17, 1923 ~ March 24, 2025

FUNERAL SERVICE

2:00 p.m., Friday, March 28, 2025
First Presbyterian Church
Wessington, South Dakota
Pastor Charles Borchard ~ Officiant

MUSIC

Susan Walton ~ Pianist
SueAnne Meyer ~ Soloist

*“How Great Thou Art” ~ “His Eye Is One The Sparrow”
Congregational Hymn
“I Come To The Garden Alone”*

CASKETBEARERS

Michael Martens ~ Chad Martens ~ Jeff Timperley
William Martens ~ James Martens ~ Brian Martens
Travis Martens

HONORARY CASKETBEARERS

Chrystal Martens ~ Sara Walker ~ Erica Martens ~ Jeni Zabel

INTERMENT

Wessington Cemetery
Wessington, South Dakota

Climbing a Hill

As a child in Dakota land I often took my father's hand.
Would say "let's go climb that hill."
No matter how busy he seem to be, he would take my hand
and climb with me.
Sometimes we got to the top to find nothing at all, just more
grass growing tall.
Or an ancient Indian village and perhaps a deer.
To a youngster in this country nothing at all seemed small.
When we stood on the top of those hills he would ask "you
want to go down?" I would reply "will you wait awhile?"
He would just smile.
As I got older the trips became less, I know now getting older
is not always best.
He called one day, asking if I would climb a hill with him, it
was not far away.
So I took his hand, we began to climb to top of his hill.
Not very fast, for we were both much older, both wanting this
climb to last.
When we got to the top there were great herds of horses and
cattle
Folks of our family, gone for years, were waving, calling his
name, all the while coming so near.
I ask "you want to go down?" He replied "will you wait
awhile?"
Though there were tears in my eyes, I just smiled.

Santa Bob Martens

*You are invited to gather with the family for refreshments and
fellowship in the church hall following the committal service at
Wessington Cemetery in honor of Stanley.*

