

## *Lester Lavern Zelle*

March 29, 1923 - March 21, 2019

Born in Waverly, Iowa

Resided in Waverly, Iowa

## Obituary

Lester L. "Les" Zelle, 95, of Waverly, Iowa, passed away on Thursday, March 21, 2019, at the Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community in Waverly, Iowa.

Lester was born on March 29, 1923, on a farm West of Waverly, Iowa, the son of Arthur and Emma (Mueller) Zelle. Lester attended St. Paul's Lutheran School and Waverly High School graduating in 1941. He attended Iowa State College in Ames, until his induction into the U.S. Army on January 26, 1943 and then at University of Idaho while in the service. While stationed at Camp Butner in North Carolina he met his future wife, V. Frances Gooch during WWII. Lester served in the European Theatre of Operation as a truck driver for a 105 mm Howitzer and gun crew with Patton's Third Army. He returned to the states in 1946 and was discharged at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin on April 2nd of that year. Lester and Frances where married on May 26, 1946, at Bullock's Methodist Church, Hester, North Carolina. The couple made their home in Waverly, Iowa, where Les continued his education at Wartburg College, graduating in 1948 with a degree in Mathematics and Physics. Following his graduation, he became employed by the Schield Bantam Company and was a project engineer, responsible for many of the design features found on the highly successful Bantam cranes and excavators. Lester retired January 1986. On October 7, 2001, Frances passed away and in 2015 Lester made his home at Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community.

Lester was an active member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, where he served on Church Council. He was also a member of the Waverly Lions Club, American Legion and V.F.W. posts, and served for twenty years on the Bremer County Selective Service Board as a member and as chairman. Lester served twenty years on the Waverly City Council, twelve years on the Waverly Electric Utility Board, and was Mayor of Waverly from 1994 through 1997. He was also active in Waverly's Sister City program and enjoyed several trips to Eisenach, Germany where he made long lasting friendships. In 2001, Lester and Frances were honored as Grand Marshals for the Waverly Heritage Days.

Lester is survived by three children and their spouses; Bruce Zelle and his wife, Candace (Carter) of Naperville, Illinois, Carolyn Zelle and her husband, Don Otto of Portland, Oregon, Lorraine Whitney and her husband, Dan of West Des Moines, Iowa; four grandchildren, Sarah (Zelle) Beckman, Brian Zelle, Lauren Whitney, and Daniel Whitney and his wife Danielle; three great granddaughters; Evelyn Beckman, Quinn Whitney, and Riley Whitney; and one brother, Rev. Edgar (Verona) Zelle of

Waverly. Lester was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Emma; his wife, Frances; and a brother, Marvin Zelle.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, March 28, at 10:30 a.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School in Waverly with Pastors Larry Trachte and Sandra Burroughs officiating. Burial with military graveside rites conducted by the Waverly Area Veteran Honor Guard will be in Harlington Cemetery. Public visitation will be held on Wednesday, March 27 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Kaiser-Corson Funeral Home in Waverly and an hour prior to services on Thursday at the church. Memorials may be directed to St. Paul's Lutheran Schools. Online condolences for Lester's family may be left at [www.kaisercorson.com](http://www.kaisercorson.com). Kaiser-Corson Funeral Home in Waverly is assisting the family. 319-352-1187.

## Guestbook



Barbara Betts Harrison  
Created : Apr 04, 2019

sorry for your loss. Thoughts and prayers to family.



Glenn Cannon  
Created : Apr 03, 2019

Waverly has lost a pillar of the community. We enjoyed working with Fran and Les on a number of community projects. He truly loved Waverly.



Michael Carver  
Created : Mar 27, 2019

Les was a neighbor and great friend of my dad Laurence Carver. Both Les and my dad were incredible community leaders in Waverly. He will be missed by all that knew him including his family. He also will be honored for his combat military service during World War II My prayers are offered up for his loved ones



Liz Kallestad  
Created : Mar 27, 2019

Dear Lorraine, Carolyn, Bruce and your families, Your Dad was a wonderful man who was committed to making the good things in his life even better family, church, community, country and more. He was successful at all aspects of his life. What a wonderful man! It has been nice to have our paths cross at the Bartel's complex on my visits to Waverly in the past few years. I will miss seeing him but am glad that he is with your Mom now. I know that you will have a wonderful time celebrating his memorable life and hope that all of you have safe travels back to your homes. Thinking of you, Liz Meyer Kallestad



Lisa and David Gaylor  
Created : Mar 27, 2019

Bruce, Carolyn and Lorraine, So sorry to hear of your father's passing. I have great admiration and respect for his service and accomplishments. It was an honor to visit

with him at Bartels while my mom was there down the hall. Les and Fran were great neighbors and family friends. God's blessing and comfort in your time of sorrow.



Tom Meyer

Created : Mar 26, 2019

Les's long life and success were well-deserved. He strikes you as a person who served his country and community with total commitment, never asking much if anything in return. And, while I'm sure we Waverly kids were a source of amusement, he always treated us with complete respect and interest. He and Fran made a tremendous, enjoyable couple. My best to Lorraine, Carolyn, and Bruce and their families in memorializing Les's life and legacy.



G nter Schuchardt

Created : Mar 26, 2019

Also Wartburg Castle lost a very good friend. We are sad and we are with Les' family and friends. Wartburg-Stiftung Eisenach Burghauptmann, Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter



Alexander Brodhun

Created : Mar 24, 2019

The "Les" that I got to know, was a great man both in nature as in spirit. Though I we didn't get to spend much time together...the hours we shared I will keep in mind and heart forever...and I will try to live up to the way he treated the descendants of his once enemies. He truly had a great heart! I'm sure he's with "Fran" now...the woman he loved and missed so dearly. My thoughts and prayers are with you - his family and friends. With deepest sympathy, Alexander Brodhun



Dr. H.-Peter Brodhun, former lord mayor of the City of Eisenach and his wife Kerstin

Created : Mar 24, 2019

Mit gro em Bedauern haben wir vom Tod von Lester L. Zelle erfahren. "Les" war ein gro er Freund der Stadt Eisenach und auch der Stadt Creuzburg, in welcher er 1945 stationiert war. Les war auch ein wunderbarer pers nlicher Freund, mit dem wir viele wunderbare gemeinsame Stunden verbringen durften. Die Eisenacher, die Mitglieder des St dtepartnerschaftsvereins und insbesondere auch meine Frau Kerstin und ich werden ihn immer in guter Erinnerung behalten. Wir sind in Gedanken bei seiner Familie und seinen Freunden in Waverly. -----  
----- With great grief have we learned of the passing of Lester L. Zelle. "Les" was a great friend of the City of Eisenach and the City of Creuzburg in which he was stationed in 1945. Les was a wonderful personal friend with whom we were blessed to spend many unforgettable hours. The people of Eisenach, the members of the Eisenach Sister City program and especially my wife Kerstin and I will keep him in fond memory forever. We are, at this time, in thoughts with his family and Waverly friends.



Milo Schield (Son of Wilbur Schield)

Created : Mar 24, 2019

My condolences to Lester's family. Growing up, I knew Les as one of the earliest engineers at Schield Bantam. I think he worked longer in Engineering than any one

else. Last year, I interviewed him for over an hour on his Bantam memories. I came to know him as a fine gentleman.



Dick Crayne  
Created : Mar 24, 2019

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Very sorry for your loss and my thoughts and prayers go out to Les's family and loved ones. Les was a wonderful community leader with a love for Waverly and its citizens. God bless you all.



Mark Baumgartner  
Created : Mar 24, 2019

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So very sorry for your loss. My parents had many great memories with your Dad and Mom. Maybe they are playing bridge right now.



Dan and Paulette Norton  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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Shocked and saddened to hear this sad news. Waverly has lost another great icon. He loved Waverly as Waverly loved him. He will be missed but not forgotten. Wishing Bruce, Carolyn, Lorraine and families strength for today and hope for tomorrow. We are out of town and will not be able to attend the visitation or funeral service. But we will be with you in spirit. With deepest sympathy, Dan and Paulette Norton



Nancy Conklin  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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Dear Zelle Family, My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. May the memories of your father provide you with comfort as you celebrate his life.



Craig McEnany  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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To the entire Zelle family. May the memories from years' past provide comfort during this time of loss. I offer my prayers as you celebrate the life that Les led by example for his family and community. Lorraine thinking of you and your family during this time.



Craig Sutton  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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So Sorry to see this, Lorraine. May God comfort you as you remember your father through the time of celebrating his life here on earth.



Linda and Rich Hartmann  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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Dear Bruce and Candy, Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time. He was a wonderful man and he will be missed by many. We have spent many years

as your friends and we have heard many wonderful stories about your dad, Bruce. We hope his memories will always keep him alive in your hearts.



Linda Laird Eytcheson  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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Iâ€™m so sorry for your loss Lorraine. I have such fond memories going to your house and seeing your parents. Your Dad accomplished so much in his lifetime. What wonderful memories to hang on to. Praying for peace and comfort for you and your families âœ“,



Ross Whitfield  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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My prayers are with all of you during this time. Uncle Les was a great man. I have wonderful memories of him and Aunt Francis. They were a very loving couple who would make anyone feel at home. The visits and phone calls were always special. I am rejoicing that Les and Franc are now together with the Lord.



John and Rosemary McKee  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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Dear Zelle Family, Rosemary and I have fond memories of a Wartburg Alumni trip to Europe with Les. He was fun to travel with and always ready to share his stories of previous trips to Europe. Les was "by the book fair" as Mayor and signed several of the documents involved with projects I was developing in Waverly. I remember one time he called me Waverly's Donald Trump then laughed out loud. He did have a great sense of humor underneath that firm German exterior. We saw him countless times at Bartels and I loved to see him smile when I addressed him as the Mayor of Bartels. He was a solid believer and we have no doubts he is serving the Lord somewhere.



Peggy Juhl Rogers  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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Bruce and Candy...and family...thinking of you at this time.... Loved my visits with Les ...he will be missed Hugs Peg Juhl Rogers



Gary Edwards  
Created : Mar 23, 2019

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Sorry for the loss. He was a great uncle and a good man. I enjoyed some of his world war 2 stories he share. My prayers are with you all

## Photos

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## Services

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### Visitation

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#### **Kaiser-Corson Funeral Homes, Inc.-Waverly**

218 2nd Street SE  
Waverly, IA US 50677-0215

 [Map / Directions](#)

 Wednesday, March 27, 2019  
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

### Service

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#### **St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School**

301 1st St. N.W.  
Waverly, IA US 50677

 [Map / Directions](#)

 Thursday, March 28, 2019  
10:30 AM

### Burial

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#### **Harlington Cemetery**

1001 1st Street S.W.  
Waverly, IA US 50677

 [Map / Directions](#)

 Thursday, March 28, 2019  
11:15 AM