

Seneca, KS

Norbert Francis Gress, 86, of Seneca died July 21, 2016 at his home surrounded by his children following a courageous four year battle with cancer.

Norbert was born on August 25, 1929 to Aloysius and Lorene Tanking Gress on a farm northeast of Seneca. When he was a year old, the family moved to a farm southwest of Baileyville. In 1933 they moved to a farm near St. Bridget before moving to the Gress homestead northeast of Seneca in 1937. Norbert attended school in St. Bridget and in Seneca, graduating from Sts. Peter and Paul High School with the Class of 1947. After high school, he helped on the family farm as well as helping neighbors.

On November 21, 1953, Norbert married Maleta H. Broxterman at Sacred Heart Church in Baileyville. They lived and farmed at Mercier, Kansas for seven years before moving to the family homestead northeast of Seneca in 1961. The couple celebrated 31 years of marriage before Maleta passed away on November 25, 1984. Norbert stayed on the farm until 1990 when he moved to Seneca. Even though Norbert lived in town, he was a country man at heart and continued helping his son and sons-in-law farm as long as his health permitted.

Norbert was a member of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Seneca, St. Joseph Society of the church, and the Knights of Columbus Council 1769 of Seneca (member since 1951). He also served on the church council at St. Peter's in Mercier, was on the organizing board of the Brown County COOP, the Nemaha County DHIA Board, and the Sts. Peter and Paul School Board. In 2004, Norbert was presented The Capper Foundation Adult Volunteer Award and the Interhab Volunteer of the Year award for his work at the Nemaha Country Training Center and at the Capper Foundation in Topeka.

Norbert loved to play cards and spent many hours in his wood shop. Each year the grandchildren looked forward to their Christmas gift from him as he always had a handmade surprise for them, including jewelry cases, cedar chests, toy boxes, and a variety of toys. Norbert was a man who was generous of his time and good will. Some of the projects he made for The Capper Foundation, Topeka Association for Retarded Citizens (TARC), and the Nemaha County Training Center brought him the greatest joy. He believed in giving back to the community and frequently donated his wooden crafts to local benefits raising money for medical expenses of those with health issues.

Besides his wife, he was preceded in death by his parents, Allie on January 1, 1985 and Lorene on May 29, 1997; a daughter, Mary Kay in May of 1960; a grandson, Adam Bloom on February 7, 2009; two foster grandchildren, Steve Fullen and Jennifer Clapsaddle; and his brothers, Emmett in 1931, Leonard on June 13, 1957, and Charles on March 6, 2013.

Norbert is survived by a son, David of Seneca; eleven daughters, Elaine Gress of Phoenix, Arizona, Janice (Jim) Johnson of Topeka; Donna (Steve) Sudbeck of Seneca, Joan (Thom) Copenhaver of Omaha, Nebraska, Theresa (Mark) Young of Topeka, Marilyn (Wayne)

Rottinghaus of Seneca, Susan Bloom of Netawaka, Myra (Dave) Lybarger of Garnett, Lisa Gress of Shawnee, Lori Kurovski of Shawnee, and Kathy (John) Alrid of Rowlett, Texas; sisters Dorothy Dick of St. Joseph, Missouri, Eleanor Heideman and Arlene Haverkamp both of Seneca; 32 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren; and a foster grandchild.

Rosaries will be prayed on Sunday, July 24, at 2 & 7 PM at the Lauer Funeral Home in Seneca. The Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:00 on Monday, July 25, at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Seneca. Burial will be in the church cemetery.

Memorials can be given for Sts. Peter and Paul School or the Nemaha Country Training Center, and sent in care of the family.

To express your sympathy and for more information visit www.lauerfuneralhome.com.