

Seneca, KS

George J. Holthaus, 101, passed away peacefully on Sunday, October 25, 2020, at Nemaha Valley Community Hospital in Seneca. He was transferred there with pneumonia one week earlier from Life Care Center of Seneca, where he had lived since October 2016.

George was born March 23, 1919, the firstborn to Francis and Rose Olberding Holthaus on the family homestead southeast of Baileyville. He grew up there, attended Sacred Heart School at Baileyville and helped work on the family farm. In 1940, George started to farm on his own. On October 1, 1941, George married his “2nd grade sweetheart classmate”, Rita Reinecke, at Sacred Heart Church in Baileyville. They lived on a farm southeast of Baileyville until 1943, when they moved to a farm northeast of Seneca where they farmed for 16 years. In 1959,

George and Rita moved 1½ miles west of Baileyville where they established a new farmstead. There they continued to raise their eight children and George continued his passion for farming and also raised cattle and hogs, with Rita by his side, until they retired in 1983 and moved to a new home in Seneca. He continued to stay active in farming until 2003, by helping his children and grandchildren farm. When George’s beloved wife’s health failed, and she had to enter the nursing home, he diligently visited her every day, feeding her daily when she could no longer do so herself, for over 4 years, until her death on February 19, 2009. After her death, George continued to live on his own and enjoyed his large garden and fruit trees, canning all the fruit and vegetables they produced. As his strength and health declined, he decided to enter the nursing home in October 2016. While living at Life Care Center, he still remained active by stationary cycling every day and growing tomatoes in the courtyard. He also remained interested in farming and he loved when his family would take him country cruising to see the crops growing!

When the COVID pandemic hit in March, in his wisdom he immediately stated, “This is going to change the world”, which indeed it did. He accepted the drastic changes that it brought to his life, but for the last 8 months of his life, with the COVID restrictions, he desperately missed seeing his family and he yearned for the times he spent with them.

George was a member of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Seneca, was very devoted to his faith, and diligently prayed the rosary every day. In the past his memberships included being a school board member with an active role in the consolidation of USD #451 in Baileyville. He also served on the Nemaha County Coop board for nine years and on the board of the Citizen’s State Bank for several years. George was a lifetime active member of the Knights of Columbus and sang in the church choir. He enjoyed reading and playing cards, but his greatest joy was the time he spent visiting with his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. He loved reminiscing about “the good ol’ days” and shared his knowledge of history and politics with his family, who thoroughly enjoyed listening to his stories.

Besides his wife, George is preceded in death by two stillborn infants, Dennis in 1944, and Mary Ann in 1948, his son Nick, on December 22, 2011, his infant grandson, Michael Holthaus,

on September 14, 1966, and a son-in-law, Roy Dalinghaus, on December 28, 2002. Also preceding him in death are siblings, Sr. Sharon Holthaus, OSB, Rita Strathman, Edwin Holthaus, and Leo Holthaus.

Surviving children include Harlan Holthaus (Georgina), Baileyville, Galen Holthaus (Sharon), Marysville, Rosalee Stimac (Bob), Seneca, Elaine O'Connor (Bill), Kansas City, MO, Betty Sudbeck (Richard), Nancy Sudbeck (Don), Joanie Holthaus (Arlyn), and daughter-in-law, Jeanne Holthaus, all of Seneca. He will also be greatly missed by his 38 grandchildren, 84 great-grandchildren, with 2 on the way, 7 great-great-grandchildren, with 1 on the way, 10 step great-grandchildren, and 4 step great-great grandchildren. Vivina Strathman of Seneca is his only surviving sibling.

George will lie in state at Lauer Funeral Home on Tuesday, October 27, 2020 for public viewing and to sign the book; the family will not be present that day.

George will lie in state at Sts. Peter & Paul at 9 AM Wednesday morning.

A Rosary will be prayed at 10:30 AM, Wednesday, October 28th at Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church. The Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11AM at Sts. Peter & Paul Church, following the rosary. Burial will be in Sacred Heart Cemetery in Baileyville.