



Harlan Lloyd Nelson

September 8, 1932 - October 14, 2025

Honorable Harlan Lloyd Nelson passed away on October 14, 2025, in Maple Grove, MN, at the age of 93.

Born on September 8, 1932, in Litchfield, MN, to Lloyd and Inez (Behrmann) Nelson. Harlan graduated from Litchfield High School in 1950. He earned his undergraduate degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in 1954, where he was a four-year letter winner in wrestling and received the Outstanding Wrestler Award from the MIAC Conference that same year. He went on and graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1959.

Harlan served active duty in both the U.S. Army and Air Force.

On January 2, 1955, he married Ruth "Inga" Arlene Carlson in Evanston, IL. They began their life together in Minneapolis, where Harlan practiced law with Moore, White & Burd.

In 1960, Harlan moved to Fergus Falls and co-founded the law firm Polkinghorn, Williams & Nelson. He was appointed Otter Tail County Attorney in 1963 and served until 1978. During this time, he also served as president of the Minnesota County Attorneys Association and as a member of the Board of Governors for the Minnesota State Bar Association.

In 1978, Governor Rudy Perpich appointed Harlan as Judge of District Court. He served with distinction until his retirement in 1998. He also contributed as a faculty advisor at the National Judicial College in Reno, NV.

Harlan was active in Augustana Lutheran Church in Fergus Falls and later a devoted member of Zion Lutheran Church in Amor. He contributed

significantly to the creation of "God's Acres" at Zion.

An avid outdoorsman he enjoyed hunting, fishing, skiing, golfing, and water sports. He was also active in the Jaycees, Lions, Elks, and American Legion.

Harlan is survived by his wife Ruth (Inga), daughters Ingrid (Bobby) Garvey, Lucia (Bruce) Wheeler, Anna (Mark) Strub, and Kersti (Jeremy) DeMar; six grandchildren-Patrick, Greta, Joe, Kelsey, Bailey, and Britta; three great-grandchildren-Mia, Chase, and Ivy; and his brother Stanley Nelson.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother Richard "Dick" Nelson.

May his memory bring comfort to those who knew him.

A private family service will be held at a later date.

Tribute Wall

SH

“ Harlan was our neighbor in Fergus Falls for many years. He was very interested in hunting and would love to talk about his dog. We shared our love of dogs.

SHARON and THOMAS HINTGEN - October 25, 2025 at 01:13 PM

LS

I'm very sorry for your loss. I had great respect for him and I have fond memories of my friendship with all of the Nelson family.

Laura Spaulding - March 22 at 11:35 AM