



Merlin Roy Bretzman

October 12, 1934 - January 10, 2026

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Merlin Bretzman of Bloomington, MN passed away peacefully at 91 secure in his salvation. Born at home on the farm in Lakefield, MN, Merlin was the third of four children to parents Delbert W. and Erna Bretzman. He graduated from Lakefield High School in 1952 where he was a pitcher on the baseball team. After working on the farm for a year, he attended Worthington Junior College and the University of Minnesota earning a BBA in Accounting - the first in his family to graduate from college. He joined the army reserves, serving only 6 months due to health issues. Merlin started a job at Blue Cross in Minneapolis as an auditor and spent his entire career in the insurance industry, finishing at the executive level. To his last days, he favored numbers, ledger paper and mechanical pencils.

Merlin married Nancy Boyer in 1960, settled in Bloomington, and had three children and a plethora (30+) of foster children. Merlin was an avid bird watcher, amateur photographer, fisherman & hunter. He lived out his farming heritage by working hard around the home, lawn & garden and taking excellent care of his tools while wearing both a sweatband and a cap.

Merlin was known for his smile, kindness, sense of humor, and his ability to

put people at ease. He cultivated long-term friendships through church, reunions, and hosting friends and relatives at the cabin. Despite his lack of swimming skills, he enjoyed canoeing and patiently drove the boat for all manner of water activities with his life jacket securely buckled. Merlin was a big sports fan, especially when his grandkids were involved. Always present for his family, he attended numerous sporting and extracurricular events. He taught by example subjects including auto maintenance, financial responsibility, household repairs, and how to not get too worked up about things.

Merlin retired in 1998 from MMIC and was able to spend more time traveling, honing his card playing skills and becoming a wine connoisseur; both the taste and the entertaining stories on the back of wine bottles delighted him. Two favorite travel destinations were Australia and visiting the Carter Family Fold in Virginia. As a "foodie" he is remembered for his love of fig newtons, Nilla wafers, chocolate covered cake donuts, meat sticks and saltine crackers - all washed down with Mountain Dew! Throughout his life he was a generous supporter of many individuals and causes including Christian education for disadvantaged youth.

Merlin is survived by his wife Nancy, sisters-in-law Carol (Vernon) Bretzman, Maxine (Delmer) Bretzman, son Peter Bretzman, daughters Karen (Eric) Prell, Laureen (Michael) Schaser, foster daughter Susan (John) Nguyen, daughters of the heart Kari (Dan) Mattison, and Kristi Ellis, 9 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren, a niece and 5 nephews. He was preceded in death by parents Delbert and Erna Bretzman, brothers Vernon and Delmer Bretzman, sister Eunice (Wally) Hohenstein, a granddaughter, and two nephews.

Funeral services will be held at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, 9201 Normandale Blvd, Bloomington, MN

Saturday, January 17, 2026

Visitation: 10:00am

Funeral: 11:00am

Luncheon to follow

On Demand Videos ' St. Michael's Lutheran Church - Bloomington, MN

Interment at Fort Snelling National Cemetery at a later date TBD

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to Hope Academy Give Now ' Hope Academy or Trinity First Lutheran School Donate Now ' Trinity First School in Minneapolis, MN

Hope Academy: Give Now ' Hope Academy:

<https://www.hopeacademympls.org/give>

Trinity First: Donate Now ' Trinity First School in Minneapolis, MN:

<https://trinityfirstschool.org/donate/>

Cemetery Details

Fort Snelling National Cemetery

7601 34th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55450

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Funeral Service for Merlin Roy Bretzman in memory of Merlin Roy Bretzman



Washburn-McReavy - January 15 at 02:31 PM

DC

“ Dear Nancy and Family,
Please accept our deepest condolences and sincere sympathy on the Home Going of Merlin. He will be remembered and missed by all of us blessed to have known him. Knowing that there are no final good-byes for those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer we trust and look forward to that great reunion at the Wedding feast of the Lamb. What a glorious day that will be. We are sad that he is gone from our presence but able to rejoice that he is no longer struggling with pain and mobility issues. He was always so active and available to help others in so many ways. He truly lived as he believed in 'Love the Lord' and 'Love your neighbor'. Our prayers for you are that the many wonderful memories you all have of your time spent with Merlin will carry you through this brief time of sorrow and know that we can trust the promise that 'Joy comes in the morning'.

Denny and Marti Clark

Denny Clark - January 16 at 10:40 AM

MI

“ I only met Merlin two times but know his daughter Karen well. She loves her dad and spoke fondly of him. He continued to fight and be with his loved ones until the end. Sorry I cannot be with you all to celebrate Merlin's homecoming with Jesus but know his smile and kindness had already infected this earth in a positive way for so many years. With Love and respect, The Lundborg's (from Michigan)

Michelle - January 14 at 09:38 PM