

Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud

October 25, 1940 - January 22, 2025

Dr. Neil B. Hensrud, 84, passed away peacefully in his sleep on January 22, 2025, at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis, where he lived for just a few months. He resided with his wife Faith in their home in Plymouth, Minnesota, for the previous two years. Neil was born in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on October 25, 1940 to Ingman (Sparky) and Adelaide (Brusegaard) Hensrud and was the oldest of three boys (brothers John and David). He completed his bachelors, masters and doctorate degrees from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. He has been married to his wife Faith for 35 years and together they raised two children. He and his former wife Margaret (Berge) Hensrud, with whom he shared 26 years, raised three children.

A man of faith, he was active in the church. A longtime member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lake Nebagamon, Wisconsin, he was active in the Trinity Quartet and he helped to finish a 2500 sq ft addition to the sanctuary alongside other volunteers, completing the project debt-free. After relocating to Bemidji, Minnesota, he was a champion for the Lutefisk dinner at First Lutheran Church.

Neil was blessed with a lengthy career, and when asked what he did for a living, he would say, "There wasn't much I didn't do." Neil served as an Armor

Officer in the United States Army and his initial assignment was to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Kaiserslautern, Germany. After that, he returned to the states where he served in several reserve units before being recalled to active duty as Assistant professor of Military Science. After a brief assignment in Virginia, he served in the US Army Reserve, primarily as an instructor trainer, until retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel.

During his early career, Neil lived in Milner, North Dakota, where he taught high school social studies and drove the school bus. After he returned to Grand Forks in 1967, he completed his PhD and briefly taught at UND. He developed a KOA campground; was a real estate agent; and owned a recreational-vehicle business and several rental properties. While living in North Dakota, he served as a member of the state House of Representatives, the Grand Forks City Council, and was a Grand Forks county commissioner. His claim to fame was having the Smiley Face painted on the water tower. "Smiley" grinned down on Grand Forks from the 1970s to 2009, when the water tower was dismantled.

His career continued in Wisconsin where he served as Director of the Small Business Development Center and professor of business at the University of Wisconsin - Superior. He retired from the university in the early 2000s. Following his retirement, he found a new career in property development, purchasing and developing a subdivision and numerous town homes in Lake Nebagamon. He continued his political career serving on the board of the Village of Lake Nebagamon and then as the village's president.

Neil was an avid aficionado of classical music and he loved to sing. His passions included barbershop, and singing with the Trinity Lutheran Quartet,

Duluth Superior Symphony Chorus, the Bemidji Chorale, and First City Singers. He was active in the Lions, Elks, Masons, and numerous collector-car clubs. He had several collector cars over the years, and when asked how many cars he owned, he quipped, "One more than my wife knows about!" His favorites were Studebakers and Packards, and of course his 1967 blue Corvette.

Neil and Margaret (Berge) had three children, Kaaren (Carol Hubbard) Hensrud, Konnie (Cameron) Aplin, and Kenn (Bobbi) Hensrud. Neil and Faith (Harjala) had two children, Christine (Aaron) Widmer, and Joshua Hensrud. His seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren brought a smile to his face and made him very proud. He was always ready to listen to the dreams and aspirations of his children and grandchildren and liked to offer advice, whether they took it or not.

Neil was preceded in death by his parents, and his sister-in-law Carol (Fedje) Hensrud. He is survived by his wife Faith; former wife Margaret; his five children; seven grandchildren, Kris, Kylee, Kodee, Kahnnor, Keeton, Alice, and Miles; three great grandchildren, Cana, Callyn and Carl; and his brothers John (Sharlene) Hensrud and David (Linda) Hensrud, along with numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

While he battled a form of atypical Parkinsons (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy) in his later years, he remained steadfast in his faith and love of family, as well in a hope for a cure. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of the following: CurePSP; the Parkinson's Foundation; or the Struthers Parkinson's Center in Golden Valley, Minnesota.

Neil's Celebration of Life will be held on Monday, February 3, 2025, at 11 a.m. at the Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapel, 2300 Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, Minnesota. We invite you to join family and friends for a visitation one hour prior to the service. Luncheon will follow. As an Army veteran and retired Lieutenant Colonel, Neil has the great honor of being interred at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Those who are interested may follow the procession to the cemetery and we will arrive there at 1:30 for a 1:45-2:00 p.m. ceremony with military honors and a committal service.

Thank you to the staff of Synergy Home Care, Park Nicollet Methodist Hospice, the Minneapolis Veterans Home, Grace Hospice, VA Healthcare, and the Struthers Parkinson's Center for your wonderful care and compassion.

Neil's service will be live streamed. Access to the live streaming can be found on his obituary page on the www.Washburn-Mcreavy.com website.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 3. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Bloomington Chapel
2300 W. Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431
(952) 884-8145
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Chapel Service

FEB 3. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Bloomington Chapel
2300 W. Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431
(952) 884-8145
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Graveside Service

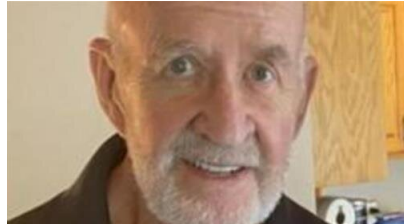
FEB 3. 1:45 PM - 2:15 PM (CT)

Fort Snelling National Cemetery
7601 34th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55450

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Chapel Service for Neil Barry Hensrud in memory of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud



Washburn-McReavy - January 25, 2025 at 02:17 PM



“ I am so sorry for the loss of Dr.Neil.He was a special man. May the good Lord comfort his family now and days to come.



Joyce Jemutai - February 03, 2025 at 09:07 PM



“ Faith -- our deepest sympathy on Neil's passing. His quick wit and smile endeared him to us all. It was our privilege to get to know him through church, the BSO Board, and, of course, BSU. He definitely made this world a better place for all he encountered.
Sue & Stu Rosselet

s & s - February 03, 2025 at 07:58 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud.*



February 01, 2025 at 12:05 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud.

February 01, 2025 at 12:05 PM



“ *David D. Kons purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud.*



David D. Kons - February 01, 2025 at 11:56 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud.*



January 31, 2025 at 04:29 PM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud.



January 31, 2025 at 01:04 PM



“ The Widmer Family purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud.



The Widmer Family - January 30, 2025 at 02:50 PM



“ Faith, I am sorry to read of Neil's passing. My husband, John, became involved in Lion's Club when we lived in Lake Nebagamon and enjoyed seeing him again when I worked at UWS. John passed in 2017. Neil was certainly someone who contributed to this world, encouraging others, supporting neighbors, and being a delight to talk with.
May you find peace in your memories and your family.

Maryjane Cass Burdge - January 29, 2025 at 11:35 PM

TW

“ I am so sorry to hear of Neil's passing, I was part of a bible study that was held at New Salem in Bemidji, MN. Neil was such a fun and engaging part of our group, he always had so many fun stories to tell and jokes to add to our group chats. Most of the time he was the only guy in the group of ladies, but we loved having him with us and I think he probably enjoyed being the only guy, LOL! On behalf of me and all the rest of the bible study we say thanks Neil for being a part of our group.

Tara Wendt - January 29, 2025 at 04:25 PM

MD

I also shared in the Bible Study. We did indeed appreciate Neil's participation and friendship, and I am grateful for the opportunity to get acquainted with him there. My sympathy goes to his family and friends. He will be missed by many but his contributions continue to live on.

Marge Danielson - February 01, 2025 at 01:51 PM

TG

“ Faith, may you and your family be comforted through reflection and shared memories. Keeping you in our thoughts and prayers.

Terry Gaalswyk

Terry Gaalswyk - January 29, 2025 at 08:23 AM

JS

“ Neil was a very close friend of my brother James Schefter. They both had their formative years back in Grand Forks, ND. As Jim's younger brother by seven years, I can recall many interesting things that they did with their compadres. (All good!!)
In Jim's book 'ALL CORVETTES ARE RED' there is some explanation.
RIP Neil.
Jerry Schefter...Fountain Hills, AZ

Jerry Schefter - January 28, 2025 at 08:08 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud.



January 28, 2025 at 07:33 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. Neil Barry Hensrud.



January 27, 2025 at 10:19 AM

DP

“ Faith, I am so sorry for your loss. You and your family are in my thoughts. I hope shared memories bring you some comfort. Sharon Pierce

Dr. Sharon Pierce - January 26, 2025 at 08:09 PM

BZ

“ *Faith & Family,*
I was so saddened to learn of Neil's passing. He was a great friend during the years you were in Bemidji, and we all profited in numerous ways from knowing Neil. Our prayers are with you at this time.
Bob Zarrett

Bob Zarrett - January 25, 2025 at 05:52 PM

KP

“ *Sincere condolences to Faith & Family in the passing their husband/father/grandfather. Deepest sympathies. May his memory be eternal!*

Peggy Kennedy

Kennedy Peggy - January 25, 2025 at 03:55 PM

DS

Our deepest condolences to Faith and family for your loss of a wonderful husband, Father and Grandfather. Neil was a close friend and confident during our time together at St. Norbert College supporting the ROTC program. Thanks to Neil we were able to include students from the University of Wisconsin Green Bay in our program. RIP Neil and thanks for your friendship and excellent service. I also wish to extend my condolences to Margaret and Neils extended family.

David Kons Sr. - January 28, 2025 at 10:49 AM

AC

Faith ~ My sincere condolences. Ann Charbonneau (WITC - retired)

Ann Charbonneau - January 29, 2025 at 04:11 PM



“ 18 files added to the album Neil



Christine Widmer - January 25, 2025 at 01:29 PM

DE

“ So very sorry to hear about Neil’s passing. We had so many great times and created wonderful memories. Travels to Ft. Knox always with ‘cheese curds’ through Wisconsin, and the many, many “stories” will continue to bring smiles. Know that you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers.

Dennis Elbert - January 25, 2025 at 12:07 PM

VH

“ So sorry to hear of Neil's passing. I will miss our lunch conversations at the Veterans Home. Take care.
Vikki & Jim Hancock

Vikki Hancock - January 24, 2025 at 10:30 PM

JP

“ So sorry to hear about the passing of Neil, You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers. I will miss visiting with Neil at our family reunions and get together a.

Janice Pieske - January 24, 2025 at 07:01 PM

TM

“ Neil was a good friend, a Packer, Beaver, and Fighting Hawk (Sioux) fan who looked good in that green and white Caddie. Conversations that engaged faith and politics with more wondering than certainty. Well done good and faithful servant and thanks for sharing the journey! Tim Megorden

Tim Megorden - January 24, 2025 at 06:53 PM