

Brown County, KS

Donald Richard Barnes, a life-long resident of Brown County, KS passed away Dec. 5th, 2020 at the age of 92. He is survived by his wife, Betty; children Donnita (Mike) Gerhardt of Ottawa, KS; David (Cynthia) Barnes of Hiawatha, KS and Joey (Tracey) Barnes of Powhattan, KS.

He is also survived by his brother Doyle Barnes of Council Grove, KS, 11 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren (one on the way), 1 great-great-grandchild and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents White and Esther Schober Barnes, stepmother Pearl Barnes, brother Melvin Barnes, sister Dorothy Tollefson, and grandson Tyler Gerhardt.

A graveside service will be held 10:00 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 12th at the Powhattan Cemetery.

Donnie, as most knew him, was born on a farm 2 miles south of Baker, KS on Sept. 13th, 1928 to White Barnes and Esther Ruth Schober Barnes. In 1931 at the age of 2½ his mother passed away. He was raised by his father going to the fields with him every day either riding on his work horse or in a box White made for him. When he tired, he would lay down for a nap at the end of a furrow. At age 8, he talked his dad into letting him drive his own team of horses to help shuck corn. As a teen, he convinced his dad to buy a tractor then get rubber tires and a road gear so he could get to the fields faster. In 1933, White married Pearl Baker, who Donnie came to love.

Donnie attended rural schools at Concord and Hickory Grove and graduated from Willis High School in 1946. After High School, Donnie continued to help his dad on the farm as well as work odd jobs in the county. He also went on wheat harvest in the Dakota's one summer to earn money.

One night at a dance in Powhattan, Donnie met a striking redhead. The two began dating and on January 20, 1952 Don and Betty Jean Wenger were wed in the Methodist Church in Powhattan. With a loan from the bank and some help from relatives, Don and Betty moved to a farm south of Powhattan. With hard work, perseverance and a little luck the two prospered. In 1954, Don got the opportunity to rent (and eventually buy) a larger farm 2 miles east of Powhattan from a retiring aunt and uncle. This is where he would live the rest of his life. Don and Betty would purchase adjoining land from a neighbor and as the farm grew so did the family - Donnita in 1952, David in 1955, and finally Joey in 1962.

Donnie had two true loves: his family and farming. His love for his family was unconditional and knew no bounds. He had a special soft spot for grandchildren and later great-grandchildren. He also loved all aspects of farming: the freedom and independence, the seasonality, the

challenges and rewards of working with mother nature. He was a good steward of the land. Don and Betty endured droughts, floods, disease, low prices, high interest rates, and family tragedies. Don would eventually bring his sons into the farming operation – first David then later Joey.

One of Don's greatest joys was having the whole family out for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Betty made sure there was plenty of food; however, the day was never complete until a hotly contested game of "Annie Over" was played. The family would split up into two teams with one team throwing a ball over the house. Members of the other team would try to catch the ball and "tag" as many opposing players out before they ran to safety on the opposite side. There was a constant switching of sides if you were lucky enough not to get tagged. Don and Betty usually watched from the front porch.

As Don approached his nineties, neighbors would comment how miraculous it was he was still able to go out each day and work the farm. It was the work that kept him young and gave him purpose. But alas, all good things must come to an end and his body did eventually wear out. Now he is at rest with our Lord and Savior and loved ones that have passed before.

Don will lie in state after 10 a.m. on Friday at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorials to the Powhattan Methodist Church or Powhattan Cemetery can be sent to the Chapel Oaks Funeral Home 124 South 7th St., Hiawatha, KS 66434. Online condolences may be made to www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com.