

## GETTING TO KNOW OUR PARISH FAMILY

---

### Ray & Marianne Nicolai



Ray Nicolai has been a life-long resident of the Hampton Community and member of the St. Mathias Catholic Church. He attended St. Mathias School in 1925 when the school opened. He has many good memories growing up in this rural community. A fond memory was when he played baseball for the Hampton Cardinals for many years (12) with his brothers Herb, Harry, John, Mark and Dan.

He remembers well, when Fr. Klaers talked him into being the first lay person to read at Sunday Mass. He admits being nervous getting up in front of his fellow parishioners, but after Mass, when someone complimented him on a job well done, he lost his nervousness, and lectured for another ten years! Ray also has a very good singing voice and sang with the Adult Choir for over 20 years.

His wife, Marianne (Niebur) moved here from Nebraska with her family in 1942. She and Ray later married in 1944. Ray's sisters, Dixie and Sis, married two of Marianne's brothers, Flory and Vernie, making a 3 Nicolai-Niebur family combination.

Ray and Marianne have seven children, 23 grandchildren and the great-grandchildren number is still growing. Their children Leo (Joyce), Judie (Mike O'Gara), Jerry (Peggy), Ray Jr, Randy (Teri), John (Lynn) and Julie (Mark Peine) all live within thirty miles of the home where they were raised. Most of the grandchildren are in the area, the farthest only four hours away in Fargo, North Dakota.

When they were first married there was no electricity in the rural areas. Ray was instrumental in getting electric lines brought to the farming community. He also served for many years on the Board of the Dakota Electric Association as well as the Dakota Stanton Mutual Insurance Company. The Nicolai's raised hogs and were involved in the pork industry, having the Grand Champion Duroc Boar at the Minnesota State Fair in 1957. Ray was one of the founding members of the Dakota County Pork Producers Assoc. and inducted into the Minnesota Livestock Hall of Fame.

Marianne and Ray participated in various activities and attended many Conventions together. Both were members of the St. Mathias Choir and the Hampton Boosters. They were active in the Catholic Aid (Catholic United Financial) and were 4-H leaders when their children were younger.

In her spare time, Marianne enjoyed sewing, crocheting and ceramics. She was also active in a quilting club and was a member of the St. Conrad's Circle of the St. Anne's Society at St. Mathias. Marianne is now living at Angel's Care Nursing Home in Cannon Falls, as a result of Alzheimers disease.

Before she went to the Nursing Home, Marianne was a constant companion of Ray's. Even now he visits with her three or four times a week. They have seen many changes in their lives but have always been there for their family. The nursing staff has commented that Marianne gets more visitors than most of the residents.

God bless the Nicolai's and keep them in His care.