

Obituary

Garald Leonard Horst 1944-2026



Garald Leonard Horst, 82, of Arnold, Nebraska, died Oct. 12, 2026.

Garald was born Feb. 1, 1944, in West Point, Nebraska, to Leonard John and Alverna Adele (Tonges) Horst, and grew up on the family farm in northeast Nebraska as the oldest of four boys. He earned the rank of Eagle Scout, was a member of the Order of the Arrow and was active in 4-H. It was during his high school years that he first picked up photography which would become a passion that he would carry through his life.

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Garald met Karen Kay Cool, and they were married in 1966. He earned his bachelor's degree in agronomy and his master's in weed science from UNL. He proudly served in the Army, with an honorable discharge as Captain. He and Karen then moved to Missouri, where they welcomed their son, Robert, and Garald earned his doctorate in forages from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The family moved to El Paso, Texas, when Garald joined the Texas A&M University Agricultural Research System, where he managed research programs on drought and stress tolerance of plants and water use in grasses. It was in El Paso where their daughter Elizabeth was born. Garald served on the El Paso Parks and Recreation Board, helping the city learn to manage and conserve water across its park system.

In 1990, Garald returned to Lincoln to join the Department of Horticulture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His research and teaching focused on toxic substances introduced into the environment and how plants can be used to assist in the cleanup of contaminated soil. He retired in 2010 as professor emeritus in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture.

After 48 years living in cities across four states, Garald and Karen moved to Arnold to be closer to family and to rediscover

rural Nebraska and the lure of the Sandhills.

The camera that once documented his research became Garald's creative outlet in retirement. He and Karen logged countless miles across Nebraska in search of just the right light, just the right shot. Sandhills sunsets, stormy skies and prairie grasses provided no shortage of opportunities, and he was patient enough to wait for the moment and stubborn enough to drive back when he missed it. Karen, it should be noted, was just as patient! His work was accepted into a juried show at the Carnegie Arts Center in Alliance, Rose Gallery in Broken Bow, won awards at the Mullen Arts Center and was featured twice in one-person shows at the The Most Unlikely Place in Lewellen. His prints were sold through the Comstock Gallery and other galleries and community events across the Sandhills. He was well known as the "man behind the camera."

Garald is survived by his wife of 60 years, Karen, of Arnold; son Robert of Holdrege; daughter Elizabeth (Phillip) Goetzinger of Portland, Oregon; grandchildren Brandon (Kayla) Horst, Christina (Anthony) Prather, and Ceara Adams; eight great-grandchildren; and brothers John (June) Horst of Wisner, Harlan (Jeannie) Horst of Alta Vista, Missouri, and sister-in-law Rose Horst of Egg Harbor, New Jersey; in-laws Allan and LaDonna McClure, Ron and Nancy Cool, and Jerry and Judy Cool.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Leonard and Alverna Horst; his parents-in-law, Grayston and Marjorie Cool; his brother Loren Horst; and nephew Scott Cool.

Memorial services were held on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 11:00 AM at the United Methodist Church in Arnold. Govier Brothers Mortuary/Arnold Funeral Home are in charge of arrangements. Online words of remembrance or condolences may be left at www.govierbrothers.com