

# Henry David Goerzen

JANUARY 11, 2019

Henry David Goerzen was born of strong pioneering parents, October 28, 1928 in the Rosebud Coulee, Crossfield Alberta. A middle child of David and Susanna Goerzen, he grew up one of 10 children, completing grade 9 at the Rodney School. He then attended Menno Bible Institute on the Bergthal campus which brought young people of Alberta together to deepen faith and prepare for service in the churches. Dad was baptized on confession of his faith May 25, 1947 by Rev. C.G. Neufeld.



Destined to provide a supportive role on the family farm, as culture of the day dictated, he made a different and decisive other choice which altered his life's course. He left home with \$20 in his pocket, hitchhiking to Drumheller where the love of his life, Erna Warkentin, awaited him. On a chilly day November 2, 1952, they were married in the small Warkentin home in Munson; Reverend William Pauls presiding.

After a brief foray in the coal mines and trucking business, they headed out to the fertile lands east of Carstairs where they in turn raised 6 children including bidding a sorrowful farewell to their firstborn son, Martin John.

From humble beginnings, and with the help of neighbors who grew into lifelong friends, the farm grew and gave meaning to Dad who saw it as a God-given trust. While Mom had a huge garden and a growing family to tend to, Dad rose early to

diligently mend fences, weld up parts for self-maintained machinery, build grain bins, and always nurturing children with trust to learn the skills to run a farm. There was no need for extra-curricular activities. Well, there was one major interest, artwork, which began with doodles in the church bulletin and evolved to the fine artist he became.

With his growing family, spiritual nurture was cultivated through family devotions and church life. From there, the family saw Dad as an emerging leader in the community and the larger Mennonite constituency. This started with Sunday School superintendent, then Alberta Conference secretary and chairman. Later, together with Mom driving miles and miles to collect stories of our Mennonite people, then translate them from German, he eventually started the Alberta chapter of the Mennonite Historical Society. As children attended Rosthern Junior College, he took an active role on its board of directors.

Revising constitutions and taking on administrative roles blossomed into other ventures such as Calgary Power transmission line negotiations, addressing the land use forum, taking a run at politics in the waning Social Credit era, and finally addressing their condominium association in Didsbury.

Dad farmed east of Carstairs, on a mixed farm of hogs, cattle, and grain. In 1989 he turned the operation of the farm over to son Eric. He was not completely ready to retire, so he purchased another farm on the Dogpound river, west of Didsbury. Albert joined him in this operation, focusing mostly on raising cattle. He fully retired in 2006, and moved into Didsbury; first to College Green, and finally to Aspen Ridge Lodge.

In all of this, he cultivated relationships of respect and interest in people's lives. Hospitality was always included which Mom helped with, often hosting meals or taking in night company. While driven and always diving into projects with diligent thoroughness, forever a lifelong learner, he recognized his own

shortcomings and vulnerabilities, not wanting to be remembered for any kind of earthly perfection. His hope was one with eternal implications and he yearned for his heavenly home to be reunited with those who have gone before. Dad passed away January 11, 2019 with Mom and family at his side.

And so, we bid you a fond farewell to rest in God's abiding and loving home above. Suesse Ruh - a well-deserved rest.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to Mennonite Central Committee Alberta, 2946 - 32 Street NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 6J7

<https://donate.mcccanada.ca/registry/henry-goerzen-memorial> or Aspen Ridge Lodge, P.O. Box 399, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0.

## Messages of Condolence

Hi Erna and Eric, your dad's life is a beautiful story of love, diligence, learning and creativity. That's so inspiring. Our condolences.

— **Renita Hamm**

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<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/goerzen-henry-david>

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