



## Robert C. "Bob" Freelend

October 10, 1929 - April 4, 2020

Robert C. Freelend, 90, of Central City, died on Saturday, April 4, 2020 at home surrounded by his family and loving cat, Bean. The family was able to have a living memorial for Bob prior to his death. In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to the Merrick Foundation for the "Bob and Willa Freelend Memorial Garden Fund" at [www.merrick-foundation.org](http://www.merrick-foundation.org). Condolences may be sent to the family at [www.soltwagnerfuneral.com](http://www.soltwagnerfuneral.com).

Robert Charles Freelend was born on October 10, 1929 to Edward and Pearl (Peck) Freelend in Havens, Nebraska. He attended several rural schools in Merrick County as his parents moved many times during his childhood. Bob started to work at an early age and was doing heavy labor before the age of 16. He worked on several farms, Reeves John Deere Company and drove cattle trucks to Omaha. The Korean War found Bob working in a factory manufacturing shell and rocket containers. This was followed by more years in the fuel industry, working in service and trucking fuel to rural customers. Bob drove truck for Walnut Grove and eventually started driving school bus for Central City, a job he enjoyed for many years. His love of the kids and pride in keeping them safe brought many lasting friendships and great memories. What started as a hobby in the early 1970s turned into a business that became his pride and joy, Freelend Greenhouse, which operated until his retirement in 1992.

Bob enjoyed country music his whole life. He learned to dance and loved it. Many weekends were spent with friends traveling to hear area bands and

dance the nights away. He was a proud member of Central City Sportsman's Club for 63 years. He enjoyed blue rock shooting, fishing, motorcycle riding, gardening, raising pheasants and quail, bowling and spending coffee time with friends. He served on the board at Christ Episcopal Church, was a fitness center volunteer, youth shooting leader, and worked at the Merrick County Fair as night watchman for many years. He proudly raised the best geraniums around – red being his very favorite. Bob loved visiting with people – he never met a stranger. Passions included hunting deer with Ed and Bernice Lock for many years and enjoyed annual trips to hunt antelope in Wyoming. He was a good neighbor wherever he lived. He spent 20 years loving life on the lake at Willow Bend before returning to Central City these past nine years.

Bob had his wish for a “living funeral” over the last weekend of March. He was surrounded by his immediate family sharing stories of a lifetime filled with love and adventure. He enjoyed loads of cards, calls and video chats from friends and family near and far. His proudest moments were marrying his greatest love, Willa, and celebrating nearly 65 years of marriage together, along with raising four children who respected and loved him for who he was.

Those left to cherish his memory are his children - Nicholas (Rebecca) Freelend of Marquette, Jeffrey (Leonora) Freelend of Lewiston, ID, Nancy (Miles) McGinnis of Central City, and James (Joe Costello) Freelend of Denver, CO; his grandchildren – Paul Freelend, Michael Freelend, Melissa Freelend, Robert W. Freelend, Jonathan Freelend, Emiline McGinnis, Charles Jackson McGinnis, Graci McGinnis, Jacque Hageman, Jennifer Gering, and Jami Castilleja; and one Great Granddaughter – McClain Freelend; his sisters-in-law – Gail Land of Lakewood, CO and Barbara Sidders of Central City; his brothers-in-law – Neal (Rozella) Sidders of Wood River and Larry (Sharon) Sidders of Bozeman, MT.

He was preceded in death by his wife – Willa Freelend; his parents – Edward and Pearl Freelend; his in-laws – Vernon and Iva Sidders; and brother-in-law – Dean Sidders.



# Tribute Wall

CW

“ Gonna miss him. Willa was my (Chris) Red Cross swimming coach and Bob delivered feed to us when we were first married (1961) Loved them both. They both were very involved with supporting the kids in our community.  
Our thoughts are with their families.  
Chris & Paul Wait

---

**Chris Wait** - May 13, 2020 at 09:12 AM

CS

“ We have many memories of Bob as he was not only a client, but a very dear friend. We looked forward to Bob coming every year to antelope hunt with us. Bob was such a caring man, and was always so much fun to be around. The stories we have of antelope hunting will forever live in our hearts. Over the years we looked forward to our Thanksgiving phone calls and keeping in touch. And we were so blessed to get to see him this last year. Bob will be missed so much. Our thoughts and prayers are with all his family and friends.  
With love, Steve and Cory Sheaffer and Ramona Moody

---

**Corrine Sheaffer** - April 18, 2020 at 10:46 AM