

Donald Polries, age 97, of Carrington, formerly of Sykeston, ND, died Thursday, April 6, 2017, at Golden Acres Manor, Carrington, ND.

Donald John Polries entered this world on a farm near Sykeston, ND, on January 19, 1920. He was the oldest child of Elizabeth (Thury) and Mathias (Math) Polries. He was later joined by sisters Evelyn, Lorraine, Eleanor and brothers Alvin and Louis. All six of the Polries children learned the value of hard work on the farm as they worked side-by-side to help their parents.

Don attended school until eighth grade, and then began his life's work as a farmer. His career was interrupted twice as he ventured out into the world. As a very young man, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, where he learned to operate heavy machinery, earning \$30 a month, sending \$25 of that home to his parents. During World War II, he served in the United States Navy and was a member of the Seabees, the Naval construction force. He was stationed in Japan, where he honed his heavy equipment skills building airstrips.



After the war, Don returned to Sykeston to farm with his brother Alvin. In 1952, he married Sheila Barry, and together they had eight children. Don and Alvin formed Polries Bros. in the 1960s, fed as many as 10,000 cattle, managed a large farming operation, and ran a feed and seed business from their elevator, hiring local skilled workers to help with their operation. At one time, five families lived on the Polries farmstead, and the school bus could pick up 24 children in one stop.

Don was a leader in trying new farming and livestock feeding practices. His leadership was recognized by many organizations, including being named the Outstanding Agriculturist from Wells County by North Dakota State University in 1976. He was one of the first farmers in North Dakota to plant sunflowers and also experimented with various small grains and row crops. He kept a positive outlook through low prices, high interest rates, devastating hail storms and unforgiving droughts. He enjoyed nothing more than a good soaking rain, and his favorite vacation each year was going fishing in Canada after the crops were planted. When Don and Alvin retired, their sons took over the farming operation. Don lived in Carrington and Bismarck after retirement, before moving to Golden Acres Manor in Carrington, where he has resided since 2014.

Don gave generously of his time, talent and resources to his family, friends, neighbors, parish and community. He served on the St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church's Parish Council and the Sykeston School Board for many years. He was a member of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, the American Legion Post #17 in Sykeston and the VFW Post #3524 in Carrington. Don bowled in a men's league, liked to snow ski and would travel many miles for an opportunity to waltz and polka all night long.

Don was very proud of his family and a sentimental birthday card or hug would easily bring a tear to his eye. He is survived by his sister, Lorraine Carr, Carrington; his children, Linda (Charlie) Donlin, Bismarck; Julie (Lyndon) Larson, Mesa, AZ; Peggy (Mark) Anderson, Bismarck; Patti (Bruce) Penas, Fargo; Larry (Cessna) Polries, Jamestown; Jon (Stephanie) Polries, Sykeston; daughter-in-law Kim Polries, Thompson; 22 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his infant son, Donald Michael Polries; son, David Polries; great-grandson William Polries; his parents; sisters, Evelyn Warren and Eleanor Erfle Knight; brothers, Alvin and Louis.