



## George A. Gaukler

August 22, 1936 - March 11, 2025

George's Celebration of Life Service is viewable at <https://vimeo.com/1074676153>

George Anton Gaukler, age 88, of Valley City, ND, passed away at CHI Mercy Health hospital, Valley City, on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. He was born on August 22, 1936, in Sisseton, SD, to Aloysius Bernard Gaukler and Agatha Catherine (Duerr) Gaukler. George grew up on a small farm outside of Lidgerwood, ND. After graduating high school in 1954, he drove truck to deliver gas to local farmers. George then joined the U.S. Army and served two years.

George attended Valley City State College from 1958 to 1962, graduating with a bachelor's degree in education. During his college years, he benefited from many great mentors and became a student leader in politics and student government. Following college, he had a brief stint as principal and math teacher at a small rural school in Noltimier Township, ND.

In 1964, George changed his career path by opening an office in Valley City to pursue real estate development, which he enjoyed for the rest of his life. George founded Valley Realty, Hi-Line Construction, and Valley Rental Service, which built, managed, and sold single family homes, multi-family developments, and commercial buildings. George served as president of the ND Board of Realtors and the ND Real Estate Commission. In 1997, George founded the Dakota REIT, a private real estate investment trust that owns properties throughout the Midwest. Despite his retirement from the Dakota REIT's Board of Trustees in 2023, George remained actively involved with the business of Dakota REIT Management.

George and his beloved wife, Audrey, who he married in 1971, were active contributors to Valley City State University and sought numerous ways to support the long-term growth and well-being of the Valley City community, including the fundraising and development of the Gaukler Family Wellness Center and George's longstanding work with the talented teams at the Valley City-Barnes County Development Corporation and the VCSU

Foundation. George also was a founder of Tri W-G Manufacturing, a medical equipment manufacturer in Valley City since 1967.

George was a long-time leader of the ND Democratic-NPL Party. He served as its state chair from 1980 to 1994, during which time he helped numerous local, state, and national leaders be elected to office. He also served as the Democratic National Committee person for ND, and as a member of the National Executive Committee.

He enjoyed grilling and entertaining family and friends and had a true passion for gardening, eagerly sharing his abundant produce with those who enjoyed his fresh fruits and vegetables. George and Audrey shared meaningful time with family and friends at their lake home in Minnesota and along the beaches of St. Maarten. George also enjoyed decades of family gatherings in Lidgerwood, ND, his childhood home.

George is survived by his children, Michael (Kristin) Smith, Tracy (Jeff Eyres) Smith, and Geoffrey (Monte) Gaukler; grandchildren, Connor, Mara, Karin, Nina, Patrick, Keegan, Dawson, Madison, Megan, and Reagan; great-grandchildren, Nora, Lennon, Quinn, and Sawyer; and siblings, Paul Gaukler, Cathy Wollitz, Lois Jaeger, and Claire Belford. George is preceded in death by his parents and his wife of 53 years, Audrey Lee (Dohman) Gaukler.

His family extends their heartfelt appreciation for the loving care provided by Kaley Machart and the team at Elderbee Care. Memorials are preferred to the Abused Persons Outreach Center in Valley City (<https://www.apocnd.org>) or the Valley City Parks and Recreation Foundation (<https://www.vcparks.com>) for the development of the Hidden Pond Trail. A celebration of life will be held at 3:00 PM on Thursday, April 10, at the Larry J. Robinson Center for the Arts, 306 Viking Dr., Valley City. An informal gathering will follow the celebration. Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel ([www.oliver-nathanchapel.com](http://www.oliver-nathanchapel.com))

# Previous Events

## A Celebration of Life Service

APR 10. 3:00 PM (CT)

Larry J. Robinson Center for the Arts  
306 Viking Dr.  
Valley City, ND 58072

# Tribute Wall




“ *View and Download the Funeral Program*

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**Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel** - October 16, 2025 at 10:16 AM



“ *Oliver - Nathan Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of George A. Gaukler*

 Tribute Video

**Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel** - April 03, 2025 at 06:03 PM

LA

“ Lynn A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George A. Gaukler.

Lynn A. - April 10, 2025 at 01:47 PM

JM

“ Mike, Tracey & Geoffrey. Sorry I won't make it back in time for the service but, you are in my thoughts and prayers. Spent many good times with your folks over the years. Judy

Judy Mathias - April 05, 2025 at 02:53 PM

GS

“ We didn't know George Gaulker, but we do know his brother Paul from our years at UND. We want express our sympathies to all members of the Gaulker family. George & Marlane Sanderson

george sanderson - April 04, 2025 at 01:09 AM

GL

“ I did not know him personally but I was pleased to see he had chosen memorial gifts to the Abused Person Outreach Center in Valley City. I had been instrumental in organizing the center with about 8 other people back in the 1980s. Gale Larson

Gale Larson - April 03, 2025 at 12:47 PM



“ Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of George A. Gaukler.



April 02, 2025 at 04:11 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of George A. Gaukler.

April 02, 2025 at 04:11 PM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of George A. Gaukler.



April 02, 2025 at 02:15 PM

DI

“ George and Audrey were our dear friends for 50 years. They were dedicated to public service and honesty in politics. We were blessed to have them in our lives. ❤️

Diane Ista - March 18, 2025 at 06:07 PM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of George A. Gaukler.



March 18, 2025 at 09:50 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of George A. Gaukler.

March 18, 2025 at 09:50 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of George A. Gaukler.



March 17, 2025 at 01:46 PM



“ George was a truly wonderful person. I was fortunate to know him through his involvement in the Dem-NPL. He led the party as chairman during its "glory years" from 1981 to 1995. I served with him on the executive committee. George recruited and guided numerous great candidates elected to office. During his tenure Dem-NPL candidates were elected to all federal offices and nearly all state offices. George's steadfast dedication to the Dem-NPL remains unmatched. My sincere sympathy to his family.

Gary Holm - March 15, 2025 at 09:38 PM

RZ

“ George was a remarkable business person who made a real effort to promote Valley City and North Dakota. He was also a good person and father to his three children. Our hearts and prayers are with Mike, Tracy, and Geoff. I know that you'll miss him.

Reed Zwick - March 14, 2025 at 03:24 PM



“ George was one of a kind - the best kind. His creativity, business sense, and persistence made good things happen for VCSU, the community, and beyond. He was a pillar of the community - someone who made a difference by what he did, but also just by knowing he was there. I feel blessed to have known him.

Ellen Chaffee - March 13, 2025 at 04:46 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of George A. Gaukler.



March 12, 2025 at 10:53 AM

BP

“ So deeply appreciative of George's commitment to the values of the Dem NPL and his faithfulness in leading the party during the Sinner administration. He was kind and intelligent and understood the North Dakota economy. Wonderful man.  
Bill Patrie

Bill Patrie - March 12, 2025 at 10:42 AM

GG

“ With heartfelt sympathy. Gigi Goven MD

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**Gigi Goven** - March 12, 2025 at 10:25 AM