

Leona (Wedel) Krehbiel was born Feb. 12, 1921 at Pretty Prairie, Kansas and died June 14, 2007. She was the daughter of Benjamn S. and Leah Graber Wedel.

A lifetime resident of the Pretty Prairie community, she was a homemaker.

Leona was a member of the First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie, and the Women's Mission Society.

On April 6, 1941, she married Ralph Krehbiel at Pretty Prairie. Other survivors include two sons, Riley and wife Kay, and Bob and wife Janice; 4 grandchildren, Stacey Krehbiel and wife Robin, Corey Krehbiel and wife Leslie, Sarah Krehbiel and fiance' Patrick Murphy, and Lindsay Krehbiel McCoombs and husband Jeremy; and 7 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by brothers Willard, LLOYD and Walt; half-brothers Challas, Marion "Skinny"; and a half-sister Florene Slief.

A memorial has been established with the Prairie Sunset Home.

Comments at the service by Rev. Richard Ratzlaff:

This morning I need to play the Mennonite game. This will become oblivious as I try to describe my relationship to the Uncle Ben Wedel family as one of their cousins. As noted in the obituary, there are two parts to that family. The first part of the family, including Leona and her right brothers are my first cousins because Uncle Ben's first wife, Leah, was my mother's half sister. Leona's half brothers and sister were my first cousins because Uncle Ben's second wife, Aunt Francis was my father's full sister, Confusing, maybe that is why as I was growing up all of Uncle Ben's family were simply my cousins.

I tell this as background because Ralph has asked me to share about the three women who were very important to Leona in her early years. The first of these would be Aunt Leah, Leona's birth mother and my mother's sister. Now the story becomes rather sad. Aunt Leah died when Leona was about 15 days old. All that my mother ever told me about this was that Aunt Leah, Leona's mother, was a very, very caring person. We know today, via science, that genes and DNA play a big role in the makeup of the next generation. We can all affirm that Leona was also a very, very caring person.

I did not know about the second caring person in Leona's life till many, many years later. While we were in Hutchinson as pastor of the church we learned to know the Ted Krehbiel family quite well through their daughter Kay, a member of the church. One time in a conversation Ted said something about have an "almost sister" living in the Pretty Prairie community. To my surprise it was my cousin, Leona. I would have liked to talk to my mother about all that but she was no longer alive. There is one person alive and among us that might be able to tell us more about this and that is

Della Wedel, Bill Wedel's wife. The second important woman in Leona's life then was her Aunt Anna Krehbiel. Again we are told by the experts that if a child in its very early days is not cuddled and loved and cooed over their life could very well be marred. Knowing Leona, she surely did not lack any of this. So we can surely say that her Aunt Anna became the second very important woman in Leona's life.

Now to the third important person in Leona's life. When she was about 13 months old Uncle Ben married my Dad's sister Aunt Francis. I do not know how soon Leona came back home to Uncle Ben's place. I do know that she was there when we used to go visit Uncle Bens. I remember that they had lots of cats. There was a big barn, anyway to me it seemed like a big barn. Challas and I and possibly our littler brothers were teasing those cats, maybe tying their tails together and Leona, then a two and half years older was, to me, a grown little lady, really chided us for being cruel to the animals. Surely Aunt Francis had to be a great influence, showing her the values of home making and becoming a good woman.

Again tragedy strikes. When Leona was about 12 years old Aunt Francis died. I remember going to the home at that time. I also well remember my mothers concern for Leona and the role she might have to play in the family with three younger children in the home. But now to put all this together, or, as it were to connect the dots and make a real person I would like to share some of the things the family wants me to share with you about mother, grandmother. Hear them speaking to us today:

Life on the farm agreed with Grandma. She milked the cows, hobbled the kickers, separated the cream, gathered the eggs, butchered the fryers and delivered it all to market. She was lean, strong and work hardened, but always feminine, hair held back with a red bandanna, she was always beautiful. (I know, from my mother that Aunt Francis was a very hard worker. Connect the dots.)

Grandma loved games, game shows, and loved to play games, particularly the "memory" game with her grandchildren. She would beat the contestants on "Wheel of Fortune" nearly every night.

Grandma taught herself to play the piano and the accordion. She loved music, could play any song she might hear, and do it by ear. (Many of us remember that Willard, Lloyd and Walt were good singers. My Mom was also a good singer and pianist. Was Aunt Leah, Leona's mother?? Connect the dots.)

Grandma loved her family and friends. She never missed sending cards for birthdays, and other important occasions.

Grandma loved life. She collected jokes and poems, and laughed and smiled and made life easy for those around her.

Grandma was a terrific speller and her penmanship was excellent. She often served as Grandpa's mouthpiece when he had difficult saying or spelling the words he often struggled to express. They were a virtual audio team.

Grandma was a saver, saving grandkids art, school papers and photos.

That helps put the dots together. What shall we say then on this sacred occasion? God has shown us his love in three women and the girl that grew into a woman who

again showed God's love to more and more people. Let's keep putting the dots together, for God's love is surely needed in our world. So today I say thanks to God for giving us a person called Leona. Today we envision four women standing before the throne of God, smiling and speaking to each other. Amen.