



## **Theo Jean Knigge**

08/16/1946 - 08/24/2023

Theo Jean Knigge, age 77, of Omro, was called home to heaven on August 24, 2023, following a fall and complications from dementia and Parkinson's. Despite her physical tribulations in her final years on earth, family and friends will long remember Theo for her zeal for life, community spirit, and love of family, friends, and farm.

Theo Jean Alf entered this world on August 16, 1946, in Berlin, Wis. Named after an actress her mother saw in a movie, Theo was the first-born child to Margaret (Bloch) and Alfred Alf. A Berlin girl through and through, Theo was baptized, confirmed, and married at her hometown St. John's Lutheran Church in Berlin, Wis.

Following her graduation from Berlin High School in 1964, Theo attended the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and later enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where she graduated in 1970 with degrees in English and Library Science.

That fall, Theo began teaching high school English and served as a librarian at Kenosha County's Salem Central High School. That's where she met Charles "Pete", who was teaching at the same high school. Theo took a summer job in Yellowstone National Park the summer of 1971 and her horse stayed at Pete's family's farm that summer. Having successfully passed the "horse-care test" that summer, Theo and Pete began dating and were married on August 5, 1972.

While teaching was a passion for the couple, farming was in their blood. They found an opportunity in rural Omro farm in 1973 and that's where the couple set roots and raised their three children.

As the farm business gained its footing, Theo, pursued an off-farm career while still contributing to the family farm business. To that end, Theo served as director of the Omro Public Library for nearly three decades and helped lead the effort to fundraise and build the city's new library. It's during this time that she also served on the Winnefox Library System Board of Trustees. After her retirement from the library, she remained active with Omro's Friends of the Library. In addition, she was elected to the Omro school board where she combined her passion to lead and educate.

Theo routinely shared her teaching skills in life's on-farm and outdoor classroom and was honored for over 20 years of leadership service to Winnebago County 4-H. All three children, and a grandson, were active members of the Poygan Go-Getters 4-H Club. In addition, Theo provided guidance as a member on the Farm and Home Administration Advisory Committee (now known as USDA Rural Development).

It was a love for animals that brought the couple together, and Theo

continued to raise, care for, and ride horses much of her adult life. Theo was an expert calf raiser and had a herd of cats that were known to follow her like the “Pied Piper” at feeding. People throughout the community also came to know Theo for her gifts of homemade Christmas-time bread.

Survivors include her husband Charles Pete of Omro; a son, Charlie and his son Jacob of Omro; two daughters, Krista Knigge (Corey Geiger) of Beaver Dam, and Mary Knigge (Brian Mano) and their children, Cooper and Jolene, all of Falls Church, Va. Theo’s surviving brothers include Dennis (Mary) Alf of St. Charles, Ill., Tom (Nancy) Alf of Princeton and Curtis Alf (Tammy Hage) of St. Charles, Ill. Theo’s surviving Knigge family includes Leroy “Bill” Knigge (Rose) of Salem; Rebecca “Becky” (Marvin) Gutzman of Rio; Phillip “Phil” Knigge (special friend Cheryl Baysinger) of Kansasville; and Emily (James) Uhlenhake of Salem. Many nieces and nephew also survive.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Margaret (Bloch) and Alfred Alf, and her mother- and father-in-law, Mary Lou (Berkebile) and Lloyd Knigge.

Theo’s family thanks the teams at Oshkosh Ascension Mercy Medical Center in Oshkosh, Juliette Manor in Berlin, ThedaCare Hospice, and Omro’s Grace Lutheran Church for their compassionate care and counsel.

Friends may call at the Grace Lutheran Church 720 Jackson Ave. Omro on Friday, September 1, 2023, from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. The celebration of life will continue at Grace Lutheran Church in Omro on Saturday, September 2, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. until the time of church service at 11:00 a.m. A meal will follow.

In lieu of flowers, donations and memorials will be accepted in the name of Theo Knigge. Contributions will be allocated to Omro’s Carter Memorial Library and the Winnebago County 4-H Educational Endowment Fund.

Mueller Funeral Home-Winneconne is assisting the family. If you wish please submit online condolences to [muellerfh.net](https://www.muellerfh.net/).