



## Lyle Howard Wheeler

September 6, 1929 - December 10, 2024

Lyle Howard Wheeler passed peacefully, with his family at his side, on December 10, 2024 at his home in Friendsview Retirement Center, Newberg, Oregon. He was 95 years old and was known and loved for his sense of humor, love for people and his practical wisdom.

Lyle was born at home in Stevens County, Kansas, to Leslie A. and Fay E. (Kinser) Wheeler on September 6, 1929. In 1934 the family left farming and moved to Haviland, Kansas, where his sister Eva Loraine was born.

The family later moved around to churches where Fay was pastor including Modoc Mission in Oklahoma and Friends Chapel near Coyle. They were living in Coyle, Oklahoma, when he began attending Friends Academy back in Haviland. He transferred from Friends Bible College (Haviland) to Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, where he met and married the love of his life, Janet Ariel Smith. They both graduated in 1951 with teaching qualifications.

Lyle then began the Industrial Arts department at Friends Haviland Academy in Haviland, Kansas, while Janet started the Home Economics department and taught typing and shorthand.

In 1953 he was a conscientious objector during the Korean War draft and spent two years doing alternative service as an Occupational Therapist at

Larned State Hospital.

They shared a call to missions and were assigned to Burundi, Africa, with a one year stop to study French in Brussels, Belgium. Lynette Marie was born there September 27, 1957.

After settling into their home in Kwisumo, Burundi, Janelle Ann was born December 14, 1959. A third daughter, Barbara Gretchen was born May 30, 1963 in Wichita, Kansas, when they were home for their first furlough.

As missionaries they used their gifts and passions as they worked with the Burundi people. Janet taught some sewing classes and Lyle worked in many areas, using his ability to fix motors, his carpentry skills, and his gregarious personality to reach people.

After Barbara's birth, the family returned to Burundi for another term, settling at Nyankanda where Lyle worked with the lepers in the leper colony there. He assisted lepers with self-care, gardening skills, and rehabilitation. The Wheelers returned to stay in the States in 1968 because of political unrest in Central Africa.

Lyle became a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the state of Kansas, where he used his gifts of loving all people and problem solving. He worked out of offices in Hutchinson, Dodge City and Pratt until his retirement in 1996. They then moved to the Northwest to be close to two of their daughters in Newberg, Oregon. They settled in Friendsview, enjoying the community and many old friends who were already there.

Lyle continued to enjoy his gift for growing things and sharing the harvest, going barefoot, and exploring the woods while camping with his family. He especially loved exploring Oregon's beaches, making kites and rock stacks,

building projects for his grandkids, and teaching them to love the natural world. He relished a good scrabble game and played weekly up to a month before he died.

Their eldest daughter, Lynette Marie Koehn, passed away just before Easter in 2005.

Janet joined her in October of 2020.

Lyle is survived by two daughters, Janelle Olivarez (Joseph) and Barbara Mann (Jerry) and one son-in-law, Mark Koehn (Amy). He has six grandchildren, Taylor Townsend Crevola (Zachary), Seth Lincoln Koehn (Ariana), Micah Mann (Kassandra Henley), Landon Townsend, Kendall Townsend, and Rachel Mann Dutta (Amith), and two great-grandchildren, Renly Elizabeth Dutta and August Scott Crevola.

A Memorial Service is planned for January 25, 2025 at Newberg Friends Church (307 S College St, Newberg, OR) at 2:00 pm.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JAN **25**. 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM (PT)

Newberg Friends Church  
307 S College St  
Newberg, OR 97132  
[office@newbergfriends.org](mailto:office@newbergfriends.org)  
<http://newbergfriends.org>

# Tribute Wall



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Attrell's Newberg Funeral Chapel - January 07, 2025 at 04:54 PM