



Wendell Arvid Nelson

January 31, 1938 - March 16, 2026

Princeton - Wendell Arvid Nelson, a beloved teacher, musician, and devoted member of the Princeton community, passed away peacefully on Monday, March 16, 2026, in Dixon, Illinois. His life was marked by a deep commitment to education, faith, and family, leaving a lasting impact on generations of students and all who knew him.

Wendell was born on January 31, 1938, in McPherson, Kansas, to Arvid and Clara (Gahnstrom) Nelson. He graduated from Assaria Rural High School in 1956 and went on to pursue his passion for science and learning, earning his Bachelor's degree from Kansas State University and his Master's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

After moving to Princeton, Wendell met the love of his life, Pam. They were united in marriage on July 19, 1975, in her hometown of Moline, Illinois. Together, they built a life rooted in education, service, and love, raising their three children while dedicating themselves to the Princeton school community.

Wendell devoted more than 40 years to teaching science at Logan Junior High School, where he became known not just as a teacher, but as a mentor and inspiration. His classroom was a place of curiosity and discovery, filled with hands-on experiments that brought science to life. From building submarines and mousetrap cars to designing solar ovens and balsa wood

bridges, Wendell encouraged his students to think creatively, problem-solve, and see the wonder in the world around them. His influence extended far beyond the classroom, shaping countless young minds and sparking lifelong passions.

Outside of school, Wendell's life was enriched by music, faith, and service. A devoted member of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, he shared his gift of music as an organist, often playing alongside his wife Pam at the piano. Their music became a meaningful part of worship and a reflection of their shared devotion. Wendell also gave generously of his time, delivering Mobile Meals, supporting the United Way, and volunteering within the church.

He found joy in life's simple and meaningful moments-working with his hands in woodworking projects, tending to his garden, traveling, and most of all, spending time with his children and grandchildren, who were the pride of his life.

Wendell is survived by his loving children: Susan Nelson of Chicago, Illinois; Joanna (Josh) Gates of Hockessin, Delaware; and Mitchell (Alexandra Wilson) Nelson of Wayne, Maine. He was a proud and devoted grandfather to Anders Gates, August Nelson, Curran Dibiase, and Rafe Dibiase. He is also survived by many cherished nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Pamela (Nordstrom) Nelson; his parents, Arvid and Clara Nelson; his sister, Darlene; and many dear relatives and in-laws.

A visitation will be held at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Princeton, Illinois, on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., funeral services to follow at 11:00 a.m., officiated by Deacon Michelle Francis.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the music program at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, a cause that held special meaning for Wendell and his family.

Wendell will be remembered for his kindness, quiet wisdom, and unwavering dedication to his students, his faith, and his family. His legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched and the community he helped shape.

Online condolences may be directed to www.norbergfh.com

Arrangements entrusted to Norberg Memorial Home, Inc & Monuments.
Serving Bureau County and beyond since 1903.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR **24**. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St Matthews Lutheran Church
416 Dover Rd
Princeton, IL 61356
(815) 879-6491

Funeral Service

MAR **24**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM.

St. Matthews Lutheran Church

Tribute Wall

CB

“ My condolences are extended to the family of Wendell. I was one of hundreds of students in Wendell's junior high science class and was always amazed at his love for science and how creative he was in his teaching. As a fellow musician, I appreciated his skills as an organist. As late as 2018 when my mother passed away, I was surprised to receive a phone call from Wendell, asking what music I wished to have him play at her funeral. I was grateful to be able to work with him once again so many years later. I will always remember his dedication to teaching and sharing his gift of music. God bring peace and comfort to his loving family.
Dr. Carolyn (Krase) Burns

Carolyn Burns - April 03 at 12:33 PM

JG

“ John and Jean Gewin, Tom and Vicki Giehl purchased the Dawn of Remembrance Basket for the family of Wendell Arvid Nelson.



John and Jean Gewin, Tom and Vicki Giehl - March 22 at 04:28 AM

JG

“ John and Jean Gewin, Tom and Vicki Giehl planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wendell Arvid Nelson.

John and Jean Gewin, Tom and Vicki Giehl - March 22 at 04:28 AM



“ *Robin Pearson sent a virtual gift in memory of
Wendell Arvid Nelson*



Robin Pearson - March 21 at 01:08 AM