



## Nelson Stegeman

February 4, 1929 - January 30, 2016

Having lived a rich and fulfilling life, Nelson Willard Stegeman of Holland, age 86, died on January 30, 2016, and entered the place prepared for him by his Lord and Savior. Son of Manley P. and Hattie Stegeman of South Blendon, Nelson was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Florraine Vrugink, and his second wife, Jennie Koster. With degrees from Hope College and Michigan State University and a career in education, he was passionate about teaching and learning. At New Groningen School in Zeeland he took on many roles—teacher, principal, coach, athletic director—and was instrumental in developing the district's special education program in the 1970s. His students will recall his personal encouragement and belief in their ability to succeed. Over his lifetime, Nelson financed the building of over a half-dozen schools in Bangladesh and Kenya. In retirement, he hosted Faith Travelers, introducing small-town seniors to the best of the USA and Europe, sprinkling in history and geography lessons at every opportunity. A long-time member of Faith Reformed Church, he served as elder, deacon, and Sunday school teacher. He relished campfires at the A-frame on the Little Manistee River, fishing trips into Canada, and the thrill of mountain vistas. Nelson is survived by his children, Jackie and Jim Swanezy of Holland, Steven and Ruth Stegeman of Grand Rapids, Marsha and Gregg Converse of Lowell, Marybeth and Greg Timmer of Grand Rapids, Rob and Rebecca Riekse of Grand Rapids, twelve grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Visitation will be held Friday, February 5, 4:00 – 7:00 pm at Yntema Funeral Home and Saturday, February

6, 9:45 – 10:45 at Second Reformed Church in Zeeland. The funeral service will be held at 11:00 am at Second Reformed Church, Rev. Dr. John Schmidt and Rev. Rebecca Riekse officiating. A private graveside service will follow. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Kenya Hope. [www.yntemafh.com](http://www.yntemafh.com)

# Tribute Wall



“ *Nelson Stegeman*

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August 31, 2022 at 01:26 PM



“ *"Mr. Stegeman made a huge difference in my life. I was in his first class at New Groningen. He opened up so many new ideas and his encouragement was genuine and frequent. I visited him so often, even after college, when I moved to CA. to teach. And, yes, he was my example of how to do it well! Whenever I came back to Paw Paw Drive, I'd check in with him! My last visit was the summer of 2014 and we spent some hours catching up at his Freedom Village home. He was a wonderful inspiration and a great teacher."*

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**Wanda Vandenberg Shaffer** - March 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ *"Steve, Your devoted father was everything that contributed to Zeeland and its' future. Nelson was the best of educators and his mission devoted to all. Certainly always more than anyone could ask for...  
Thanks  
Tom Bloemsma"*

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**Thomas Bloemsma** - February 07, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ *"Jackie and Jim Thoughts and prayers be with you and your family. I also enjoyed the communication with your father as I worked as a school nurse and helping parents and students."*

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**Martha Katt** - February 07, 2016 at 12:00 AM

PW

“*Steve and Ruth,  
So sorry to hear about your loss. May you feel God's comfort in a  
special way during these difficult times.*”

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**Poema Weller** - February 06, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DG

“*Our condolences to the Stegeman family. I remember Nellie from  
high school.*”

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**Dale and Esther Gillette** - February 06, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MJ

“*Mr. Stegeman was a referee when I played basketball in high  
school in the early 1960s. I always liked it when he was in the  
striped shirt because he was a very good ref and a real gentleman. I  
can see that his accomplishments in education and in volunteering  
also reflected what a truly fine person he was.*”

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**Mark Johnson** - February 06, 2016 at 12:00 AM

AF

“*One of my best friends since kindergarten And debate partner in  
high school and college Enjoyed our recent discussions and I will  
miss him very much. My sympathy to the family. Elmer Vrugink*”

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**A friend** - February 04, 2016 at 12:00 AM

LI

“*Our deepest sympathy to the Stegeman family.*”

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**Linda** - February 04, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JL

“So many wonderful memories of your Dad (and Mom) from baby sitting for you when you lived on 104th to special times in the classroom and in sports with the New Groningen schools "Hustlers", yes that was our school sport name. Your Dad made me feel very special and encouraged me to strive for the stars. I don't know if you know this but he wrote is Masters thesis about me - very honored when gave my parents an I a copy to read. I knew that he believe I could contribute something with my life: I had to strive to be everything he said I could be. Jan Wolters Lamer”

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**Janice Lamer** - February 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM

CH

“I have many fond memory of Mr. Stegeman. The best teacher I ever had. Thoughts and prayers are with the family.. Carol Vander Haar (Riemersma)”

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**Carol Vander Haar** - February 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM

LW

“Among my memories of Nels is the marvelous speech he gave at a gathering of supporters of Audio Scripture Ministries. He listed things ASM does not do directly, but then concluded with how ASM with its little audio Bibles satisfies the deepest need of the world's poorest people.”

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**Lloyd Wolters** - February 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JB

“I just wanted you to know what an enduring impact your dad (grandpa) had on so many lives. He was my teacher and principal in the eighth grade and made a real positive difference in my life. I'm 67 now and live in Arizona but my sister emailed the obit to me. I'm sorry for your loss. Jerry Blankestyn”

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**Jerry Blankestyn** - February 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM