

Dora Else Emma Pegel
June 18, 1933 - November 24, 2021

Dora Else Emma (Kenklies) Pegel, age 88, passed away peacefully on November 24, 2021, at The New Glarus Home, in New Glarus, Wisconsin. Dora Kenklies was the younger of two sisters born to Georg and Emma Kenklies on June 18, 1933, in Georgenburg, East Prussia. She grew up on a state-operated stud farm with 320 Trakehner stallions located on the grounds of a 13th-century crusader fortress where her father was appointed (inspector) the highest level of civil service in Germany. In 1944, she became a refugee fleeing the advancing Russian Army. Her family settled in Schleswig Holstein, Northern Germany. It was there Dora finished her secondary education and was accepted into the Sarepta Headquarters of the Nurses Association at the famous Bodelschwingh Institute in Bethel, Germany.



Dora had it in her heart to serve as a medical missionary in Africa, but that changed when she was assigned a young student of theology named Erwin Pegel. Following Erwin's ordination in 1954, they were engaged. They married at Schooley's Mountain Presbyterian Church, New Jersey in 1955 after completing their studies and missionary training in Germany, Nyack College, New York, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Dora and Erwin faithfully served 28 indigenous churches on eight island groups in the Truk (Chuuk) Islands of Micronesia for 13 years through the Liebenzeller Mission, sponsored by the American board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Boston), predecessor of the UCC Board for World Ministries. Dora embraced the people, culture, language, and tropical climate of the islands. She was housemother and teacher to sixty students at the Philadelphia Boarding School on the island of Tol. Dora also served as a medical provider for the island, administering medicines and providing general care. She led women's groups and used her love of music extensively in her ministry. Dora and Erwin were blessed with five children during their time as missionaries, and in 1963, the family became US citizens.

The Pegel family returned to Germany in 1968 to serve as clergy in Guetersloh. In 1972, they came to the U.S. where they served churches in Waterford, Maine, Grandville, Michigan, and Monticello, Wisconsin, until Dora and Erwin's retirement in 1995. They resided in Monroe, Wisconsin until Erwin's death in 2007. Dora then moved to Verona, Wisconsin, eventually living with her daughter and family.

Dora actively partnered with her husband in youth and young adult ministries and directed vocal choirs. She devoted her life to church work and missions, serving on innumerable committees and sharing her experiences as a missionary woman to people all over the United States and Germany.

Dora's personal interests were many. She loved music, art, gardening, and raising house plants, especially orchids. She enjoyed crocheting and creating beautiful needlepoint table runners. Dora was deeply interested in people of different cultures and ethnic groups, continuing her studies throughout her life. Her thirst for knowledge allowed her to combine her "old world" values with contemporary lifestyles and ways of thinking. She dearly loved her family and was affectionately called "Omi" by her grandchildren.

Dora remained grateful to God for her life and family, no matter the challenges she faced. She continued to express her gratitude for the staff at The New Glarus Home and Agrace Hospice Care throughout her time there. Her endurance under adverse conditions, and her faith and love for others, will continue to be an inspiration to all who knew her.

Dora is survived by her son, Daniel (Kimberly) Pegel, Olathe, KS; her daughters, Christiane Pegel-Olden, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and Angelika (Bruce) Pegel-Quade, Verona, WI; her daughter-in-law Cheri (Donald) Pegel, Colorado Springs, CO; her grandchildren, Michael (Jenna) Pegel, Gardner, KS; Nathan Pegel, Vienna, Austria; Aaron Pegel, Olathe, KS; Dalton (Adriana) Pegel, Highlands Ranch, CO; Cuyler (Nikki Tomlin) Pegel, Denver, CO; Madeline Olden, Miami Beach, FL; Sawyer Quade, Santa Monica, CA; and Anika Quade, Verona, WI; and six great-grandchildren.

Dora was preceded in death by her parents, Georg and Emma Kenklies, two sons, Donald and Martin Pegel, her husband, Erwin H. Pegel, and her sister, Toni (Kenklies) Richter.

A Celebration of Dora's life will be held on Saturday, December 18, 2021, 11:00 a.m., at Zwingli United Church of Christ, 416 E. Lake Avenue, Monticello, with Rev. Lance Smith and Pastor Mary Gafner officiating. Inurnment will follow in Highland Cemetery, Monticello. Visitation will precede the service beginning at 10:00 a.m. The Voegeli-Newcomer Funeral Home, Monticello, is assisting the family.