

# Former Niobrara resident

By Kent Warneke  
Editor of the News

Danny Liska — a native Northeast Nebraskan who always yearned for new adventures — died Tuesday in Bogota, Colombia.

The 66-year-old Liska died of leukemia after battling the disease for about three years, said his



Liska

brother, Adolph of Niobrara.

"In his most recent letters, it seemed like he was doing OK, but I guess it was the calm before the storm," Adolph Liska said. "He battled this for a long time."

Liska was one of most well-known and talked about Northeast Nebraskans. In 1959, he rode his '48 Harley-Davidson motorcycle from Alaska to the southernmost tip of South America. He later traveled from the northernmost tip of Scandinavia to the southern tip of South Africa.

Along the way, he traveled with

smugglers, ate monkeys to stay alive, suffered from malaria, doubled as a stunt man for actor Yul Brynner in a movie and wrote and published several books about his adventures and other topics.

"He did a lot of traveling," his brother said. "He lived quite a life."

Since 1973, Liska lived in Colombia with his second wife, Regina Betancur. She is a well-known politician in Colombia and a self-proclaimed mentalist and healer who goes by the name Regina XI. They met in 1968.

## dies of leukemia

Last October, Liska's wife was kidnapped by about 30 leftist rebels from a house in Cali, Colombia. She was released, unharmed, by her captors in March.

"Colombia has been good to me," Liska said in a 1991 interview with the Daily News. "It has taught me a lot that I could not have learned here."

But his chosen lifestyle wasn't always accepted by his fellow Niobrara residents.

"When you choose to be different, there are a lot of rewards, but you also have to pay the price," he said

in the same interview.

Until he was diagnosed with leukemia, Liska made an annual visit back to Niobrara to check on his 2,000-acre Bigfoot Ranch. Liska said the ranch was used as a geographical reference point by a spacecraft in 1984.

He gave the ranch its unusual name because he said there is some evidence that the legendary creature named Bigfoot does exist.

In addition to his travel adventures, Liska said he enjoyed writing more than anything else. "The

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written word is the most God-like thing," he said. He had plans to write a book about his wife's kidnapping and subsequent release from captivity.

Adolph Liska said a funeral service was to be held for his brother Thursday in Bogota. Family members say a memorial service in Northeast Nebraska also may be held.

He is survived by his wife; daughter, Johanna Liska of Bogota; two brothers, Adolph and Bob of Verdigré; three stepdaughters; and a grandson.