

James Roger 'Jim' Schmitz

James Roger 'Jim' Schmitz, 79, died of pneumonia on Thursday, Dec. 28, 2017, at the Pearl Valley Rehabilitation

6H-R 5-14-2018

and Nursing home in Perry. Interment of ashes is scheduled for 2 p.m. Friday, May 18, at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery in Adel. Survivors include his sister, Joan L. Ohnemus of Grinnell.

6H-R 5-17-2018 James R. Schmitz

James Roger "Jim" Schmitz, 79, died of pneumonia on Thursday, Dec. 28, 2017, at the Pearl Valley Rehabilitation and Nursing home in Perry, where he had lived recently.

Born Aug. 12, 1938, to Leo J. Schmitz and Ida May Theroux in Steven's Point, Wis., Schmitz was the fourth boy in the family, which in 1941 grew to include a sister after the family moved to nearby Wausau.

His father's work as a manager with the Clean Towel Service kept the family moving and Schmitz attended school in Sioux City, Iowa, before the family settled in Des Moines when he was 15. Schmitz graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School in 1956, and, briefly attended Parsons College in Fairfield, Iowa, before he transferred to St. Martin's College in Olympia, Wash., where he worked on the student newspaper, sang in the choir and earned a B.A. degree in industrial relations in 1961.

He got an early start in the grocery business, working after-school as a high school junior and during summers and on breaks from college at Easter's Super Valu in Des Moines. After college graduation in June 1961, he declined an offer to go into management training for the grocery chain, a choice, he said, he later regretted.

In 1963, he joined the Army National Guard and was activated for Army duty in 1963 and 1968. During his service, after communications training at Fort Riley, Kan., in the First Infantry Division Signal School, he worked as a wireman-switchboard operator and, later, after training with the Fifth Army at Fort Carson, Colo., as a heavy truck driver. He received the State of Iowa Service Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal before being honorably discharged as a Specialist E-4 on Feb. 20, 1969.

On June 20, 1964, he married Audrey Louise Fergin in Madison, Wis., and he did graduate work there at the University of Wisconsin. After the couple moved to Chicago, Schmitz worked as assistant personnel manager for the Saxon Paint and Hardware Co. and later as the employment manager for the Maremont Corp., now part of Arvin-Meritor, which provides motor vehicle supplies and parts.

When his marriage to Fergin ended in August 1973, Schmitz moved back to Des Moines, where he got back into the grocery business and worked as a receiving manager for Dahl's on Beaver Avenue. In 1977, he married Jeannine M. Ramey and they lived in the Waveland Park neighborhood for one year before divorcing in 1978.

Schmitz then moved to the East Side and he worked as a warranty manager at Ramsey Pontiac, then as a salesman for Addressograph-Multigraph Corp., and, later, a night manager for the Beaverdale Super Valu, Linn's Food Mart and the Crossroads USA Truckstop. He lived for more than 30 years on Kinsey Avenue and he was a member of Teamsters Local 394. Schmitz also worked part-time for Keck Parking downtown and helped set up events at Vets Memorial Auditorium in Des Moines.

A lifelong Catholic who loved a well-cooked meal and strawberries, Schmitz had a sharp mind and detailed memory for storytelling. His brother and sister remember him as a good son and brother.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his brothers Leo R. and Richard A. Survivors include a sister, Joan L. Ohnemus of Grinnell, and a brother, David M., of Marquette Heights, Ill.

Interment of ashes is scheduled for 2 p.m., Friday, May 18, at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery in Adel, Iowa.

