

6H-R
3-7-2019
James A. Ahrens

James A. Ahrens, 78, of Grinnell died on March 4, 2019, at his home.

A memorial service has been scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, March 30, at the Mayflower Community's Carman Center. Burial with military honors will be in Chester Cemetery, north of Grinnell.

The Ahrens family will receive friends for fellowship and lunch following the service at the Mayflower Community Buckley Dining Hall.

Memorial contributions may be designated to the Grinnell First Presbyterian Church or to the Mayflower Community.

6H-R
3/25/2019
James A. Ahrens

James A. Ahrens, 78, of Grinnell died on March 4, 2019, at his home.

A memorial service has been scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Saturday, March 30th, at the Mayflower Community Carman Center. Burial with military honors will be in Chester Cemetery, north of Grinnell.

The Ahrens family will receive friends for fellowship and lunch following the service at the Mayflower Community Buckley Dining Hall.

Memorial contributions may be designated to the Grinnell First Presbyterian Church or to the Mayflower Community.

A native Iowan, Jim was born May 16, 1940, and raised on his family's farm. He graduated from Grinnell High School in 1958, attended Iowa State University and Grinnell College, graduating in 1962.

Following graduation, he married his college sweetheart, Julie Williams, and entered the U.S. Air Force. While on active duty, he served as a radar controller and public affairs officer, earning a master's degree in Public Affairs from Boston University. After completing his final USAF assignment teaching ROTC at Drake University, he returned to the family farm in Grinnell. Julie, a well-known local artist, died in 1980.

Jim and Sue resumed their friendship in 1981 and were married in 1982. That year, Jim joined the faculty at Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, Missouri, teaching military history and social sciences at the junior college. Seeking reserve military duty, Jim received a direct commission in the U.S. Army Reserve. He mobilized and commanded the 418th Civil Affairs Unit that served in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Turkey during the first Gulf War. Jim retired from the military service in 1995 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and from teaching in 2002.

Following his retirement, Jim and Sue devoted their time to the Lexington 4 Life Project, helping to raise \$3.2 million to create a modern community center, as well as serving the many programs offered by the center. In 2008, Jim and Sue moved back to Grinnell and joined the Mayflower Community. In addition to various Mayflower duties and clubs, Jim was an active member of Rotary and the Grinnell Presbyterian Church.

Jim was preceded in death by his first wife Julie, his parents Al and Ester Ahrens, and his sister Sally (Ahrens) Aman. He is survived by his wife Sue; his two children Ame (Ahrens) Krippner and Abi Ahrens, and Sue's children Dawn Miller and Wendy McDougal; four grandchildren Aaron Miller, McKenna Miller, Lauren Krippner, Megan Krippner; and his brother Tom Ahrens.

Jim has contributed a great deal to the life of Mayflower and will be missed by the community. Some words he left behind for his family and friends:

"I would like to be remembered as a person who loved knowledge, both the gaining and imparting of it. I have always found pleasure in learning virtually everything. By the same token, my greatest professional satisfaction has been the pleasure of helping students learn something about their world and its past."

"I would also like to be remembered as a person who tried his best to do what was right for himself, his family and all his acquaintances. I hope that I have loved my family and have given them something with which they could face the future. To all my family and friends, I hope that I leave as good an example as I have had in meeting the challenges of life and the threat of death."

