Ralph E. Lemke, age 90, of Grinnell, died on Saturday, May 4, 2019, and left his earthly life while surrounded by many of his loving family and under the care of Grinnell Regional Hospice at the Mayflower Community Health Care Center in Grinnell.

Visitation will begin at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, June 28, 2019 at the Smith Funeral Home in Grinnell and his family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. A private family graveside service will be held on Ralph and Shirley’s anniversary, Saturday, June 29, 2019 at Pleasant Township Cemetery in Iowa. Memorials may be designated to Grinnell Regional Hospice or to the Mayflower Community to benefit the new hospice rooms, mailed in care of the Smith Funeral Home, PO Box 368, Grinnell, Iowa 50112. Memoriess and condolences may be shared with his family online at www.smithf.com.

Ralph Eugene Lemke was born the son of Herman and Edith (Mack) Lemke in rural Montezuma, Iowa, on September 17, 1928. He married the love of his life, Shirley Ogan, on June 29, 1947, in Montezuma. They resided in the Montezuma, Grinnell and Okaboji area of all of their married lives. To this union, Ralph and Shirley had 10 children together; four preceding them in death at young ages from various diseases, one given up for adoption, and two who survived them.

Ralph worked at Grinnell International Harvester as a skilled mechanic for years and then went to work for Grinnell Feed & Grain. He later worked for several years at Tolk Farms in Grinnell. He then went to work for Grinnell Laundry, delivering dry cleaning items to various places, and an opportunity came to do the same in Okoboji, where they lived for 15 years. While living in Okoboji, he also provided lawn care for many families. They moved back to Grinnell to be closer to their children so they could help provide care for Shirley. Family was very important to Ralph and Shirley. He loved providing his kids with horses and going on trail rides and to horse shows. Ralph and Shirley enjoyed square dancing and camping.

Ralph is survived by his five children, Phillip (Carol) Lemke of Newton, Iowa; David Lemke of Grinnell, Rose Loe of Springfield, Missouri; Melody (Mark) Bennett of Marshalltown, Iowa; and Kyle (Mary) Lemke of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; many grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren; brother, Calvin Lemke of Virginia; many nieces and nephews; brother-in-law, Ronnie (Virginia) Ogan of Okoboji; and sisters-in-law, Lois Ogan of Grinnell. Ralph joins his wife, Shirley in heaven, where he has wanted to be since beginning to battle Alzheimer’s in 2012. Their children, LaWanna, Olivia, David and Darrell, brother-in-law, Ralph Ogan and their brothers and sisters, Dorothy Haines, Hazel Freeborn, Don, Earl, Leonard, Walter, Jim, and Marvin.
GRINNELL — Ralph E. Lemke, age 90 of Grinnell, died on Saturday, May 4, 2019 and left his earthly life while surrounded by many of his loving family and under the care of Grinnell Regional Hospice at the Mayflower Community Health Care Center in Grinnell.

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Memorials may be designated to Grinnell Regional Hospice or to the Mayflower Community to benefit the new hospice rooms, mailed in care of the Smith Funeral Home, PO Box 368, Grinnell, Iowa 50112. Memories and condolences may be shared with his family online at www.smithfh.com. The Lemke family would like to give a huge thank you to the nursing staff and all of those at the Mayflower Community that tried to keep Ralph content on his journey through life without Shirley.

Ralph Eugene Lemke was born the son of Herman and Edith (McMeekin) Lemke in rural Montezuma, Iowa on September 17, 1928. He married the love of his life, Shirley Ogan on June 29, 1947 in Montezuma. They resided in the Montezuma, Grinnell and Oskaloosa areas all of their married lives. To this union, Ralph and Shirley had 10 children together; four preceding them in death at young ages from cystic fibrosis, one given up for adoption, and five who survive them.

Ralph worked at Grinnell International Harvester as a diesel mechanic for years and then went to work for Grinnell Feed & Grain. He later worked for several years at Joke Farms in Grinnell. He then went to work for Grinnell Laundry, delivering dry cleaning items to various places, and an opportunity came to do the same in Oskaloosa, where they lived for 15 years. While living in Oskaloosa, he also provided lawn care for many families. They moved back to Grinnell to be closer to their children so they could help provide care for Shirley.

Family was very important to Ralph and Shirley. He loved providing his kids with horses and going on trail rides and to horse shows. Ralph and Shirley enjoyed square dancing and camping.

Ralph is survived by his five children, Phillip (Cate) Lemke of Newton, Iowa, David Lemke of Grinnell, Rose Long of Springfield, Missouri, Melody (Mark) Bennet of Marshalltown, Iowa, and Lyle (Mary) Lemke of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; many grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren; brother, Calvin Lemke of Virginia; many nieces and nephews; brother-in-law, Ronnie (Virginia) Ogan of Osceola; and sister-in-law, Lois Ogan of Grinnell.

Ralph joins his wife, Shirley in heaven, where he has wanted to be since losing her to Alzheimer's in 2012; their children, LaWanna, Gloria, Daniel, and Darrell; brother-in-law, Ralph Ogan and his brothers and sisters, Dorothy Haines, Hazel Freeborn, Don, Earl, Leonard, Walter, Jim, and Marvin.