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**Richard Duane
'Dick' Gustafson**



Richard Duane Gustafson, 87, of Waconia, Minn., and formerly of Grinnell, died peacefully, surrounded by his family, on Saturday, Dec. 26, 2020, after a battle with stomach cancer.

A funeral service was held Jan. 2, 2021, at Oakwood Community Church in Waconia. Memorials preferred to Carver County Veterans Memorial and Registry, PO Box 119, Mayer, MN 55360 ccvmr.org/

"Dick" was born on Aug. 4, 1933, in Des Moines, to John and Vera Gustafson, the youngest of 12 siblings. He graduated from New Virginia Consolidated High School and enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving from 1953 to 1955 during the Korean War. He spent most of his time at Fort Hancock, NJ, as a radar operator for guided missiles. He achieved the rank of PFC (Private First Class) as well as earning the Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Medal.

Upon returning from the service, he attended Simpson College and then married his high school sweetheart, Carolyn Ruth Johnson, on Aug. 3, 1957. He worked with his father-in-law on the farm and then for Farm Bureau. He spent most of his successful career with Farm Service, Inc. and finished his working years with the Iowa Department of Agriculture. Dick and Carolyn lived in numerous places throughout Iowa and Illinois, spending the majority of their time in Vinton, Osage, and Grinnell, before moving to Waconia in 2015 to be close to their children and grandchildren.

Dick was active in the local American Legion and proudly served as a member of the Color Guard. He was instrumental in the development of the Veterans Memorial and Registry in Mayer, Minn. He and Carolyn became members of Oakwood Community Church, a source of comfort and belonging since their move to Waconia, and have been active in a Care Group and the Empty Nesters.

Dick was an excellent golfer and enjoyed golfing with his buddies for a regular game at Timber Creek, where he was the Senior Club Champion and something of a legend. He also had a group of close friends from church that he enjoyed playing golf with as often as possible. Fishing with his faithful fishing partner, Dan, was also a favorite activity. He took pride in keeping his lawn perfect and growing a small garden.

Dick and Carolyn had four children and a wonderful supply of grandchildren and great grandchildren, and he nurtured unique relationships with each of his kids and grandkids. He will be remembered as a loving husband, father, and grandfather, and a positive role model for family, friends, and acquaintances. He loved getting to know people and their stories, and "never knew a stranger!"

Dick is survived by his wife of over 63 years, Carolyn; his children Julie Howe of Chaska, Minn., Mike of Greenwood, Minn., Kristin Groenewold of Chanhassen, Minn., and Karla Carson, of Eden Prairie, Minn.; and ten grandchildren.