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Merlyn Dean Carstens

Merlyn Dean Carstens passed away January 17, 2024, at Grinnell Unity Point Hospital. He was born September 14, 1931, to Emil and Helen Carstens, in Washta, Iowa. Merlyn attended Washta Consolidated Schools and graduated in May of 1950.

After a semester of college, Merlyn joined the Navy and served during the Korean War. He earned a rank of Hospital Corpsman 3rd class and spent his time in Japan and San Diego, CA.

He married his high school sweetheart, Helen Roberts,

on December 9, 1951. After serving in the Navy, he returned to Iowa and earned his teaching and coaching degree. Merlyn taught social studies for 27 years and coached many sports. His main focus was girls basketball.

In 1984, Merlyn retired from teaching, and they moved to Grinnell, Iowa, where he accepted the position of a crop hail supervisor for Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance. After 10 years he retired from Grinnell Mutual and became an independent crop hail adjuster.

Throughout his entire life he enjoyed numerous sports including baseball, softball, shuffleboard and fishing. He was an avid fan of Chicago Cubs baseball and all Iowa Hawkeye sports. His favorite fishing partner was Helen.

Merlyn was a people person and enjoyed visiting with anybody he met. At 92 years old he was very much involved in the world around him. He enjoyed coffee time with his HyVee buddies and spent the last year of his life enjoying new friends from Windsor Manor in Grinnell, Iowa. Merlyn enjoyed group outings and spending time watching wildlife and making sure everybody was doing their job.

He was preceded in death by his parents, wife Helen, brother-in-law (Bill Gray), grandson (Stephen Carstens), and daughter-in-law (Colleen Carstens). He is survived by five children, Susan Davisson (Gary), Scott Carstens (Kim), Jill Crofts (David), Anita Laffey (Lon), and Chris Carstens (Amy). He was blessed with 13 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. He has two sisters, Sharon Duncanson (Russell) and Marlis Gray.

A celebration of Life will be held in the Spring/Summer of 2024 once details are confirmed. Merlyn and Helen will be interred in Washta, at Sunset View Cemetery.

