

Harold Johnk, 86

July 5, 1915 - April 13, 2002 ✓

AVOCA - Harold Johnk was born July 5, 1915, on a farm south of Walnut, one of two children born to Henry and Carrie Zimmerman Johnk. He father served as a Pottawattamie County Supervisor for 22 years. Harold graduated from the Walnut High School in 1933. He graduated from University of Omaha, now UNO, with a BA in 1938. He earned 12 letters, four each in football, basketball and track. He was a North-Central Champion in discus and was enlisted as All-Conference center and an All-American in football. After graduation, he turned down a chance to play professional football with the Chicago Cardinals to stay at UNO to coach freshman teams. One of his students was former Governor and U.S. Senator, the late James J. Exon. He received a Master's degree in physical education from the University of Iowa. After his college days, he played on an independent team that traveled with the Harlem Globetrotters. Harold enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1942. During his stay at Annapolis, MD, one of his roommates was Woody Hayes, former Ohio State Football coach. He taught former U.S. Senator John Glenn's swimming classes during his teaching time at Annapolis. After being discharged, he returned to the UNO athletic staff as basketball coach for another two years: He was inducted into the UNO Athletic Hall of Fame in November, 1980. He returned to farming in 1948, to help his father. He taught and coached athletics at the Lewis High School for three years. He was active in the Walnut community by serving on the board and teaching CCD classes at church. He moved to Avoca from the Johnk Century Farm in 1988 after he retired. He was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Avoca. He died at the Avoca Nursing and Rehab Center in Avoca, April 13, 2002, at age 86 years, nine months and eight days.

He is preceded in death by his parents and first wife, Elinore. He is survived by his wife, Mildred of Avoca; his twin daughters, Barbara Johnk of Mason City and Beverly Johnk (William) Smullin of Wallace, ID; his stepdaughters, Jeri (Jim) McGowan of Plattsmouth, NE and Sandra Gentner of Minneapolis, MN; nine step grandchildren; 16 step great grandchildren; his sister, Helen Sue Nollkamper of Lincoln, NE, and other relatives.

Funeral services were held April 16, 2002, at St. Mary's Catholic Church with Father John Frost officiating. Burial was in the Atlantic Cemetery. Honorary casket bearers were Clarence and Juanita McDermott, Alan and Sue Blakestead, Daryl and Rita Henningsen and Wilbur and Ioma Hubbard. Casket bearers were Terry Krueger, Kent Johnk, Dennis Johnk, Dean Ausdemore, Larry Johnk and Alan Blakestead. Knutson Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.