

## Gayle "Whitey" Petersen, 82

Dec. 31, 1932 - Dec. 6, 2015

**HARLAN** — Gayle "Whitey" Bernell Petersen was born on December 31, 1932, to Eddie and Esther (Pedersen) Petersen of rural Harlan. Together with his sister Crystal, he was raised on the family farm and attended Kirkman School. He graduated from Harlan High School and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1951. He proudly served during the Korean War in the Atlantic Ocean on the USS Cony as a Boilerman until his Honorable Discharge in 1955.

Whitey began farming, raising cattle, milking cows, and growing crops. He was a John Deere implement dealer and served as a Shelby County Board of Supervisor. Whitey was baptized at Bethel Baptist Church of Harlan, where he was a longtime member, and he later joined First Baptist Church of Harlan.

Whitey married his sweetheart, Sharon Lawson, at the Raymond, NE Methodist Church on September 4, 1955. Their marriage was blessed with four children: Rick, Shelli, Gaige and Gary. Whitey loved farming and he enjoyed teaching his sons how to farm. He was a 4-H club leader for his boys. Together, he and Sharon enjoyed being actively involved in the Shelby County Fair, as well as their community. He was a big supporter of his kids' and grandkids' school events and activities. He loved being out of doors, fishing, gardening and sharing his vegetables with others, raising sweet corn, family vacations at Okoboji, and traveling the world with Sharon and their friends.

Whitey did not know a stranger and his circle of friends was wide. He, along with Sharon, loved to provide a comfortable home where family and friends would gather for good food and good times. More than anything, Whitey so loved his family and he taught his kids and grandkids, by example, the power of humor, laughter, a smile, and a positive attitude. His playfulness, sense of humor and fun-spirit will be a cherished memory for his family. Whitey went home to be with his Lord peacefully on Sunday evening, December 6, 2015, at Myrtue Medical Center in Harlan, surrounded by family. He had attained the age of eighty-two years, eleven months, and six days.

Whitey was preceded in death by his parents, wife of sixty years Sharon, sister Crystal, and son-in-law Ryan. Those remaining to cherish Whitey's memory include his children: Rick Petersen and his wife Judi of Atlantic, Shelli and her husband Jeffrey Larson of Harlan, Gaige Petersen of Harlan, and Gary Petersen and his wife Jo of Harlan; ten grandchildren: Benjamin and Christopher Petersen, Elizabeth Whitt and Robert Larson, Justin, Jeffrey (Ashley Bruck), Jordan (Sydney), Jenna Petersen, and Ana and Ross Petersen; and many special nieces, nephews, other relatives and many friends.

Pastor Dan Hawn officiated the 10:30 a.m. Celebration of Life Service on Friday, December 11, 2015 at the First Baptist Church in Harlan. Helen Warren accompanied vocalist Dawn VandenBerg. Honorary casket bearers were Elizabeth Whitt, Jenna Petersen, Ana Petersen, Richard "Pete" Petersen, Virgil Christensen, Dave Pedersen, Richard Burmeister, and James Burmeister. Serving as casket bearers were Justin Petersen, Jeffrey Petersen, Jordan Petersen, Christopher Petersen, Ben Petersen, Robert Larson, and Ross Petersen. Military Rites were conducted by the Harlan American Legion Post No. 150 at Rose Hill Cemetery in Kirkman.



*Pauley Jones*  
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION

(712) 755-3135 • (800) 831-6805

www.pauleyjones.com

Baldwin at 9th, Harlan, IA

1304 N. Sawmill Rd., Avoca, IA