

Hugh Mortensen, 89
Dec. 13, 1923 - Jan. 5, 2013

CEDAR FALLS — Hugh Clair Mortensen was born December 13, 1923 in Shelby to Carl and Nora Moore Mortensen.

Hugh married Wilma Arlene Mowery December 18, 1944 in Council Bluffs. They were high school sweethearts, and married three days after Hugh's 21st birthday. They celebrated their 67th anniversary together at Bickford Cottage in Cedar Falls, where they had moved from Harlan to be closer to family. They were literally side by side all of those 67 years, tending to each other to a fault. As a youth, Hugh was a great athlete, excelling in basketball and baseball, and had been recruited to try out for a major league farm team as a pitcher when he



injured his elbow and was also needed to fulfill his commitment on the farm. He was a lifelong sports fan, and if you could talk sports or farming, he'd talk your ear off. Hugh was also a jokester, and one time he said he wanted the song Zippity Doo Dah at his funeral, so that's been incorporated into a video for him. As kids we were taught to be accountable and self-sufficient and you owned what ever you did, whether at school or home. We either worked on the farm or had part time jobs from the age of 14, which taught responsibility and work ethic, and there were no cell phones. One thing we learned for sure was that everything had its place and there was a place for everything and that was where it should be. But we learned. And we learned compassion. Hugh would never turn away anyone a helping hand, no matter what the task. That's what people do. We also learned honesty. There was nothing worse than telling a lie and it was just plain not acceptable behavior on any level for any reason. He taught his grandchildren how to ride bikes, shoot a BB gun, shoot a basketball, throw a knuckle ball, and how to catch a pig at the fair. They could not wait to spend time on the farm with grandpa and grandma and knew there would be a nightly bowl of ice cream before bedtime.

Hugh and Wilma lived and farmed near Harlan most of their lives, owning a dairy farm east of Harlan. Before moving to Harlan from Shelby, his two brothers, George, Bob and his step brother, Ted, all lived within a four mile stretch near Shelby. Bob later moved to Irwin, then Harlan after retirement. His younger half-sister Rose and half-brother Ronnie lived near Neola and Walnut. For many years, they would all gather monthly for supper or dessert, and all saw their 50th anniversaries. Before and after retiring to Harlan, he became a pretty good bowler, golfer and pool shark (I think he probably took a dollar or two from some of his friends in these "matches") he had friends, pool buddies, golf buddies, and neighbors in farming and cattle operations too numerous to mention. And one of his favorite daily activities after retiring from farming was the daily coffee bunch at Mickels. He always told the story of his friend Bruce who didn't talk much at these get-togethers because he said he never learned anything talking. Everyone who met Hugh was left being touched by his genuine interest in them, his sincere concern for them, and his gentle nature; truly a man with not an enemy. His children and grandchildren often looked to him for his advice and compassion on how to handle any situation. He was the genuine, real thing. We miss Hugh so very much already, but rejoice with him that he is at peace and celebrate the wonderful giving life he had that touched so many. He should have no regrets. We're proud to say he was our Dad and Grandpa.

Hugh was preceded in death by his parents Carl and Nora Mortensen and stepmother Elsie Green Mortensen who raised him from the age of two. He was excited to meet his mother Nora, for the first time that he could remember, among other loved ones that have preceded him in death: his wife, Wilma Mowery Mortensen in 2010; three brothers: George, Bob and Ronald Mortensen, and step-brother, Ted Balster. He is survived by a son, Craig Mortensen and wife Norma of Santa Cruz, CA and a daughter Cathleen Conlon and husband John of Cedar Falls; a granddaughter, Cara Bockes and husband Seth of Fort Dodge, and a grandson Chris Goede and wife Eriko of Portland, OR, and three great-grandchildren, Nora and Jake Bockes and Ayako Goede; also a step-granddaughter, Anissa Altard and a

step-grandson, Pete Finuf of Santa Cruz, CA. He is also survived by one sister, Rose Kay of Council Bluffs, three sisters-in-law: Lois of Harlan, Pat of Shelby and Avis of Atlantic.

Private graveside services will be held at a later date in the Shelby Cemetery, Shelby. Memorials may be directed to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (PO Box 4777, New York, NY 10163-4777). Condolences may be left at www.richardsonfuneralservice.com.

**Richardson
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