



Gary Eugene Holdeman

February 2, 1937 - February 23, 2026

Gary Holdeman, 89, passed away on Monday, February 23, 2026, at his home.

Gary Eugene Holdeman, son of Elmer Udell and Avis Imogene (McMichael) Holdeman, was born February 2, 1937, in Iowa City, Iowa. Gary grew up on a farm near West Branch, Iowa. As a youngster, he helped the family with many farm chores and later, while in high school, participated in basketball and baseball. Gary graduated from West Branch High School and worked as a farm hand.

On June 15, 1957, Gary was united in marriage to Bernita "Ilene" Harris in Mount Vernon, Iowa. Gary and Ilene were blessed with five children and 62 years of marriage before her passing in 2019.

Gary continued working as a farmhand and eventually farmed for himself for 5 years before starting his own sheep-shearing business. Gary sheared all over the country, from Chicago to the "big pens" out in Montana and Wyoming, with stops in Kansas, Minnesota, and Missouri as well. Gary sheared sheep until he was 79 years old, even shearing 92 lambs on a hot summer day and catching and caring for all the wool himself. Gary was also a wool buyer for 40 years, during which he contributed significantly to the industry. He also enjoyed raising Doberman Pinscher puppies.

Gary's family includes his five children: Dean (Elizabeth) Holdeman of Chariton, IA, Roger (Lynn) Holdeman of Freeport, IL, Lori (Dave) Abel of Royal, IA, Mike (Deanna) Holdeman of Reasnor, IA and Brian (Lynn)

Holdeman of Ankeny, IA, 20 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren, three sisters: Carolyn (Charles) Geertz of Nichols, IA, Mary Jo Leighty of West Branch, IA, and Penny Lou Gafeller of West Branch, IA.

Gary was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Ilene, and two brothers-in-law, Russ Leighty and Danny Gafeller.

As was his wish, his body has been cremated, and private family services will take place at a later time.

Tribute Wall

JB

“ *My deepest condolences and sympathy. I didn't know Gary but to shear like he did he was as tough as nails!* ”

Jeremy Breckenridge - February 27 at 10:41 PM

MS

“ *Michael Sheen purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Gary Eugene Holdeman.* ”



Michael Sheen - February 27 at 11:22 AM