



Gary Leigh Walker

April 10, 1937 - April 16, 2020

Gary Walker, 83, of Oskaloosa passed away early Thursday morning, April 16, 2020, at his home in Oskaloosa.

Gary Leigh Walker, son of Earl and Dorothy (Blake) Walker, was born, April 10, 1937, in Oskaloosa, Iowa. He attended East Center and West Center Country Schools in Mahaska County and was a 1955 graduate of Oskaloosa High School. As one of ten children, he learned early on the value of hard work. Following his education, Gary worked with his father on road construction; he later farmed the family farm and worked for Hanson Construction. He married Donna Garrett in 1957, and three children were born to this union. They later divorced. Gary farmed near Albia and New Sharon before moving near Searsboro in 1961, he farmed there and remained for 39 years. December 6, 1968, Gary married Virginia “Ginny” Irene Grimm in Littleton, Colorado. They purchased two more farms near Searsboro and lived there until 2002.

Gary had a passion for cars and motors, and in 1984, he began restoring cars; he enjoyed Buicks particularly. This hobby grew to be a business; over the years, he restored over 30 cars, the 1954 Buick was his favorite. Many times his cars would win first place in auto shows. He served on the board of directors for the Des Moines Chapter of Antique Automobile Club of America. In 2002, he was recognized on the back cover of the Kiplinger Personal Finance magazine for auto restoration. This article soon went “viral” and was reproduced in several newspapers all over the country and in “Living in Iowa”

on IPTV. Many farm magazines also wrote their own stories about Gary's auto restoration.

In January 1998, Gary and Ginny purchased the McNeill Stone Mansion on C Avenue East in Oskaloosa, the first step in their seven-year venture of restoring the mansion to its original grandeur. To preserve the home, they opened a bed and breakfast in 2003 with a couple of bedrooms available to guests. They continued to work until they had five rooms available. Gary and Ginny, the perfect team, did most of the work in the restoration, furnishing, and decorating the mansion themselves.

Gary enjoyed many hobbies, but in his heart, he was first a farmer. He practiced farming with the same philosophy as he did his hobbies, "Leave it better than how you found it." In 1986, he was awarded Second Place in the National Corn Growers Association for 209 bushels an acre.

Gary's family includes his wife of over 51 years, Ginny of Oskaloosa; a daughter, Kathaleen Behr of Wickenburg, AZ; two sons: Jeff (Kathy) Walker of Wickenburg, AZ and Randy (Brenda) Walker of Oskaloosa; ten grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren; siblings and their spouses: Dorothy "Dot" and Gary Van Dyk of Minneapolis, MN, Karen and Jack Bowen of Oskaloosa, Mary Sue Sigler of Oskaloosa, Stephen and Janet Walker of Oskaloosa, Linda Walker, and Peggy Walker both of Oskaloosa.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by three sisters: Marilyn, who died at age four, LuGene DeJong and Joyce Fox, and two brothers: Earl and David Walker.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, private funeral services for Gary will be held on Saturday, April 18, 2020, with Rev. Molly Goodrich of the First Christian Church officiating. Burial will be in Forest Cemetery. Langkamp Funeral Chapel has been entrusted with the arrangements. Memorial contributions can be made to the Mahaska Health Foundation for Hospice Services.

Cemetery Details

Forest Cemetery

934 North 9th ST
Oskaloosa, IA 52577
secretary@forestcemetery.com
<http://www.forestcemetery.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Gary Leigh Walker*

October 05, 2023 at 11:57 PM



“ *Kosher Tower of Treats was purchased for the family of Gary Leigh Walker.*



April 19, 2020 at 01:25 PM



“ *Gary was my 2nd cousin. I never had a chance to meet him, but looking at that smile I can tell I missed out. Clara May Walker (Russell) Osky is my grandmother.*

God bless you all

Michael Carr - April 18, 2020 at 08:08 PM

S(

“ My husband Ryan met his grandpa Gary Walker, for the very first time in the summer of 2019. I had never seen my husband so happy to finally meet his grandpa after 37 years. The memories he had with grandpa will live forever. We miss you already grandpa. Look forward to seeing you one day! Love you forever.



Sylvia Hunt (Walker) - April 18, 2020 at 01:54 PM

JR

“ Ginny,
I am very sorry. Gary was a wonderful man, I always enjoyed visiting with him, he had a great sense of humor. I remember how he would always chat with me when I was there cleaning rooms for you. He will be missed. I love you

Joy Rustad - April 18, 2020 at 12:50 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Gary Leigh Walker.



April 17, 2020 at 10:28 AM

DD

“ Oh, Virginia and family. We are so saddened to hear this. I always enjoyed visiting with Gary at the historical society events. He will be missed.

Debbie Doty - April 17, 2020 at 08:01 AM

WB

“ Virginia, I'm really sorry to hear about Gary! My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. I'm sure he will be greatly missed.



Wanda Braaksma - April 16, 2020 at 07:34 PM

JK

Dear Virginia, I am so sorry to hear of your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. God bless you my friend.

Julie Kingery - April 16, 2020 at 10:16 PM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Gary Leigh Walker.



April 16, 2020 at 07:25 PM

DL

“ Dean Lauterbach , family and friends at Lauterbach purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Gary Leigh Walker.



Dean Lauterbach , family and friends at Lauterbach - April 16, 2020 at 06:53 PM

DS

“ Ginny, I am so sorry to hear this. Got to know Gary when I worked at Bonds Resturant in New Sharon. You will be in our thoughts and prayers. May your many wonderful memories help you at this time of sadness!! Donnie and Pam Smith

Donnie and Pam Smith - April 16, 2020 at 06:38 PM

MW

“ The Walker's lived close to our house on the hill across from the waterworks. I was small..but remember most of them. Prayers for the family.
Mary (Lewis) Wisbrock

Mary wisbrock - April 16, 2020 at 04:32 PM

JD

HE WAS A GOOD MAN

JOE DURIAN - April 16, 2020 at 07:14 PM

DK

Our sympathy Ginny to you and the family. Joyce and Darrell Klein

Darrell and Joyce Klein - April 16, 2020 at 07:53 PM

JM

Ginny please accept our deepest sympathy. He was a great guy and I always loved listening to him speak about his Buick cars and the restoration work which he did with you on your mansion. John and Joey McCarthy

John McCarthy - April 17, 2020 at 01:23 PM

MM

*Ginny, please accept our deepest sympathy for you loss. We will remember Gary for his hospitality and engaging conversations during our stays at Mc Neil Stone Mansion.
Mary and Steve Moore*

mary wells moore - April 17, 2020 at 02:23 PM

BG

*Gary was known has a craftsman restoring Buick's. His knowledge and willingness to share that information will be missed. Please accept our sympathy from the Hawkeye Buick Chapter, BCA
Bill Gorman*

Bill Gorman - April 17, 2020 at 05:09 PM

BB

Ginny, My thoughts & Prayers go out to you & your family..Martin & I felt so very close to you & Gary. May he rest in peace

Barbara Bernstein - April 17, 2020 at 05:15 PM

DR

I will miss Gary very much. He was a very good man and we always had good talks about everything. Wont be the same at car events without him! He also was a great customer at my shop years ago. So sorry Virginia!!!!

Darrell Rust - April 17, 2020 at 10:30 PM

KR

So sorry to hear this news, Virginia. Once this Covid ordeal is over Connie and I would like to get together with you. My deepest sympathy. Loved it when Gary would talk about the things he knew about my father.

Kim Roozeboom - April 21, 2020 at 12:34 AM



Gary was all that was good about Iowa to us... My husband & I called the Stone Mansion home a week each summer for 15 years. Coming from CT, Gary was the first Iowa native we met. He set the standard for a culture of warmth, humor, hospitality, and style -with just enough quirkiness to keep things interesting! We will all miss Gary, but all of our lives have been truly enriched by this wonderful man!

Cynthia Bourbeau - May 02, 2020 at 02:34 PM