



Norman Zimmerman

July 3, 1932 - February 9, 2024

Norman “Doc” Zimmerman grew up during the Great Depression in rural Hancock, Iowa, without electricity, indoor plumbing, or even his own bed. But he loved to tell stories of how the townspeople would leave milk and meat on their doorstep, and how he considered his life, and his autobiography, “A Life Well Loved.” Grateful for the generosity of others, Norman paid it forward by helping the less fortunate throughout his entire life, serving as a dentist, mayor, missionary doctor, and friend to everyone he encountered. He passed away peacefully on February 9th, 2024, at the age of 91, at his home at the Deerfield Retirement Community in Urbandale, Iowa.

Norman’s mother, Lola (Warner) Zimmerman, died when he was two, and his father, Earl T. Zimmerman, had to “ride the rails” after flooding destroyed their onion farm. While his sister, Bonnie, was sent to live on her Aunt and Uncle’s farm, Norman and his two brothers, Willard and Warner, were largely raised by their grandmother, Sadie Warner. However, Norman still found plenty of love and support from his next-door neighbors: “Mom and Dad Hanna” and their daughters, Rachel and Leona. The Hannas treated him as a bonus son, caring for him and his eventual children as family members, with both families still considering each other relatives to this day.

Thanks to a small scholarship and odd jobs, Norman managed to work his way through Simpson College, where he met his first love, Cynthia (Jones)

Zimmerman, marrying her during her senior winter break while he was on leave from the Army. The couple moved to Texas during his dental training at Baylor, while Cynthia taught music at Arcadia Park Elementary School, and they started their own family. Moving to her hometown of Oskaloosa, Iowa, Norman began his many decades of dentistry practice and community service.

Some highlights of Norman's long, dedicated service include serving as the town mayor, Boy Scout Leader of Troop 71, lay leader and youth minister at the Central United Methodist Church, marching band chaperone, and serving on many boards, including the Oskaloosa Savings and Loan Association and the George Daily Trust. Travels to far-off places to provide missionary, dental, and/or rebuilding labor included trips to Alaska, Hawaii, Bolivia, China, Russia, and as a mayor to Oskaloosa's Sister City, Shpola, Ukraine. Norman loved to sing, including as a tenor soloist for The Messiah in church and playing the lead roles in the community theater musicals. He was still singing "Bring Him Home" from Les Miserables during his final days.

After losing Cynthia to Alzheimer's in 2006, Norman reconnected with her sorority daughter, Elaine Mason, whose deceased husband Scott had been his fraternity brother. This dynamic couple married and continued to travel and help others, living in Humboldt, Iowa, then Des Moines, Iowa, and ultimately settling in the Deerfield retirement community in Urbandale, Iowa. At Deerfield, Norman was known for his joyous spirit, silly jokes, and delight in conversation.

Norman is preceded in death by his first wife, Cynthia Ann (Jones) Zimmerman, their son, James Arthur Zimmerman, and all his brothers and sisters, parents, and his beloved bonus Mom, Dad, and sisters.

He is survived by his second wife, Elaine Mason; daughter and husband, Julie

(Rod) Bolin; son and wife, Jay (Lisa) Zimmerman; son-in-law, Frankie Ma; grandchildren, Zachary Zimmerman, Sydney Bolin, Leslie Bolin; and many nieces, nephews, and bonus children and grandchildren.

A public celebration of life service will be held in the Central United Methodist Church, Oskaloosa, Iowa, on Saturday, April 27th, at 2 pm. Following the service will be a time for fellowship and refreshments in the church fellowship hall. An additional private service will be held for Deerfield residents in the Deerfield Event Center, and a private family burial will take place in the Beacon Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be given in Norman's name to the Jim Zimmerman Scholarship Fund for the Malachi Winter Guard; when donating please use this link, <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/109901aa-0166-4c8c-9002-385e4436bb65>
Langkamp Funeral Chapel & Crematory has been entrusted with Norman's final arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Beacon Cemetery

1860 260th ST
Oskaloosa, IA 52577

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

APR 27. 2:00 PM (CT)

Central United Methodist Church
201 North Market ST
Oskaloosa, IA 52577

A time of fellowship and refreshments will follow the service in the church fellowship hall.

Tribute Wall

KB

“ Karen Bradbury planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Norman Zimmerman.

Karen Bradbury - April 15, 2024 at 02:44 PM

KB

“ Karen Bradbury purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Norman Zimmerman.



Karen Bradbury - April 15, 2024 at 02:44 PM



“ Love's Tapestry was purchased for the family of Norman Zimmerman.



April 12, 2024 at 01:53 PM

TB

“ Tamela B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Norman Zimmerman.

Tamela B. - February 22, 2024 at 03:36 PM

TW

“ *Tami Weller lit a candle in memory of Norman Zimmerman*



Tami Weller - February 20, 2024 at 04:50 PM

SO

“ *My deep condolences to Elaine and all of Norman’s children and grandchildren. I was Blessed to get to know the two of them at Deerfield; what a wonderful couple! Norman was an absolute delight to talk to and such a decent man. His autobiography “A Life Well Lived” is on my desk as I type this. It is so inspiring.*

God Bless all of you.

Steve Owens

Steve Owens - February 19, 2024 at 01:54 PM

SM

“ *Norm was a dedicated and thoughtful Board member of Oskaloosa Home Loan/Horizon Federal during the time he served. His guidance was appreciated. Sincere condolences to his family at this difficult time. Sharon McCrea*

Sharon McCrea - February 18, 2024 at 01:38 PM

MB

“ *The Zimmermans were such great people and neighbors .Norm will be missed by so many, he was A wonderful man and helped so many. RIP Norm.*

Marty burke - February 17, 2024 at 09:43 PM

BT

“ *Brenda Todd lit a candle in memory of Norman Zimmerman*



Brenda Todd - February 16, 2024 at 04:16 PM

KL

“ *He was a great dentist.*

Keith Larson - February 16, 2024 at 03:57 PM

DR

“ *Norman was my sons scout leader and a wonderful man.*



Dena Roorda - February 15, 2024 at 07:06 PM

MB

“ *He was a wonderful boss. I had just graduated from OHS and he took the chance hiring me. I never forgot that first “real” job and Norm’s kindness.*

Mary Melcher Brackett - February 15, 2024 at 07:00 PM

LK

“ *I think I can still Norm’s sweet voice singing in the choir. Peace to all the Zimmerman family and friends.*

Lisa Kloose - February 15, 2024 at 02:00 PM

KD

“ *He was my dentist when I was in high school, and many years after, was a kind and friendly always!* ”



Karen Denburger - February 15, 2024 at 10:08 AM

SG

“ *My favorite memory of Norman was listening to him whistle as we walked up or down the steps to the choir loft. No one could whistle like Norman! Shirlee Gallagher* ”

Shirlee Mae Gallagher - February 15, 2024 at 09:25 AM

TB

“ *Toni Breuklander lit a candle in memory of Norman Zimmerman* ”



Toni Breuklander - February 14, 2024 at 09:13 PM

CV

“ *Cliff And Leilani VandeWall lit a candle in memory of Norman Zimmerman* ”



Cliff and Leilani VandeWall - February 14, 2024 at 04:58 PM