



## Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer

February 20, 1984 - September 8, 2023

Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer, age 39, of Alta, Iowa died Friday, September 8, 2023 at the University of Iowa Hospital.

Funeral services will take place Monday, September 18, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Storm Lake. Burial will follow in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Aurelia. Visitation will be held Sunday, September 17, 2023 from 3-7:00 p.m. with a Prayer Vigil and time of sharing at 6:30 p.m., all at the CHURCH. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of TJ to the Alta - Aurelia Warrior Athletic Boosters and the Alta - Aurelia Elementary PTO. The Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home in Storm Lake is in charge of the arrangements.

On February 20, 1984, Don and Karen (Zimmerman) Schaefer were blessed with the birth of their son, Tyler John Schaefer, in Cherokee, Iowa. TJ was baptized and confirmed at Memorial Presbyterian Church in Cherokee.

From a young age TJ was a driven child with a marked passion for sports. The Oakland Raiders, Iowa Hawkeyes and Aurelia Bulldogs ruled his world. Everything he did reflected ultimate loyalty to these teams, even to the details of asking Santa for blue and green bedroom carpet to display his Bulldog pride. He worked hard at sports, scouts, school and volunteering for his community. He loved his hometown of Aurelia, Iowa and often reflected on his

favorite job ever at Maple Valley Hardware.

His childhood work ethic paved the way for great success in high school sports. He loved playing baseball, playing third base among other positions, advancing to substate baseball with his team in 2001. TJ played tight end and defensive end on the 2001 8-player State Runner-up Aurelia Football Team, playing every play of the championship game on both sides of the ball. He also made his mother endure many cold nights of track meets, even though track was merely used as conditioning for baseball and football. TJ enjoyed music very much and joined the high school concert band, often assigned the triangle, but was eligible to play guitar for jazz band and played with the Aurelia Jazz Band at the Iowa Jazz Championships three years running.

He graduated from Aurelia High School in 2002 and went on to attend Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge where he was active with band, theater and served as an officer in the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. He later finished his bachelor's degree in education at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls.

On August 2, 2008, TJ was united in marriage to Jolene Frantzen in New Hampton, Iowa. They were blessed with three daughters: Jacqueline, Jocelyn, and Nora.

TJ decided at a young age to become a teacher and coach in a small town. He fulfilled these plans beginning his teaching career at Exira High School in 2007 teaching social studies and coaching football, baseball and track. Exira football became a special experience of hard work and great memories, seeing the team into the 2010 playoffs and many more successes. He saw the end of the Exira High School era and the beginning of the Exira-EHK Spartans, even pushing for them to adopt the Raiders colors as they were selecting a mascot and school colors. (They settled with Raiders colors plus

maroon).

In 2012, TJ, Jolene and Jackie relocated to South Hamilton of Jewell where TJ taught high school social studies and was the head football coach of the Hawks. Coach Schaefer led the South Hamilton football program to its first winning season in 5 years and led the Hawks to the playoffs in 2013. TJ injected enthusiasm into the football program and encouraged all athletes in the weight room which has led to more successes since he left. He also proudly organized the Veterans Day assemblies with his government students and supported the music department as both a teacher and husband to the director. Mr. and Mrs. Schaefer were often thought of as “school parents” for many students. The family, including baby Jocelyn, later moved closer to home, accepting jobs at MMC and Storm Lake. While at MMC and MMCRU TJ taught special education, assistant coached the 2015 8-player State Football Championship team and was the head baseball coach for the MMCRU Royals. After Nora was born, TJ finally made it back home accepting a high school social studies position at Alta-Aurelia High School where he also coached football and girls track, sending 20 events to State Track in three seasons. Mr. Schaefer’s students were a second family to him, as were his co-workers. Along with a solid history and civics education he provided well timed movie quotes, dad jokes and classroom food parties.

TJ’s hobbies revolved around his daughters and his students. Instead of picking up a typical hobby, TJ could be found in the weight room, supporting students at school activities or driving his girls to dance, softball and countless other activities. He never missed a birthday party, recital, or concert and was very involved with the many details that made holidays perfect in their home. They enjoyed traveling as a family and made great memories at Table Rock Lake, Florida beach and bowl trip vacations, Disney World, Texas, Boston, New York City and he proudly took his wife and children on his dream

“honeymoon” to Canton, Ohio to see the Pro Football Hall of Fame. The girls had the privilege of riding to school every morning with their old man and spending precious time in his classroom before and after school. He happily coached all three girls’ softball teams and enjoyed taking them to Iowa City to see Hawkeye football and basketball. Being a father was his greatest accomplishment and passion in life and he did everything for his girls, including caring for their rambunctious basset hound, Marge, and looking the other way when they brought home a shelter cat instead of a dog this summer.

Left to cherish TJ’s memory include his wife: Jolene Schaefer of Alta; daughters: Jackie, Jocelyn, and Nora Schaefer of Alta; parents: Karen (Kevin) Kestel of Storm Lake; Don (Jean) Schaefer of Aurelia; brothers: Nick (Devin) Kestel of Eagle Grove; Mike (Lesley) Kestel of Alta; Jake (Elizabeth) Schaefer of Cedar Falls; in-laws Tom and Irene Frantzen, Alta Vista, Iowa; sister-in-law: Jess (Michelle) Frantzen of Rochester, Minnesota; brother-in-law: James (Amanda) Frantzen of Elma, Iowa; nieces and nephews: Aiden Kestel; Riley Kestel; Melissa Kestel; Reese Kestel; Reece Meitner-Luna; Beckett Frantzen; Thomas and Eleanor Schaefer; extended family and many friends. He was preceded in death by his grandparents: Dean and Nadine Schaefer; Kenny and Joan Zimmerman; and Gene and Doreen Kestel.

# Cemetery Details

## Pleasant Hill Cemetery

5623 V Avenue  
Aurelia, IA 51005

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP 17. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church -- Storm Lake  
320 Seneca Street  
Storm Lake, IA

## Prayer Vigil

SEP 17. 6:30 PM (CT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church -- Storm Lake  
320 Seneca Street  
Storm Lake, IA

*Time of Sharing*

## Funeral Service

SEP 18. 2:00 PM (CT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church -- Storm Lake  
320 Seneca Street  
Storm Lake, IA



# Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album Video



Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home - October 25, 2023 at 04:13 PM



“ Alicia Thompson lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer



Alicia Thompson - September 20, 2023 at 01:48 AM



“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home - September 18, 2023 at 11:03 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.



September 18, 2023 at 10:38 AM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.



September 18, 2023 at 10:25 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.

September 18, 2023 at 10:25 AM



“ Dear Jolene, Words cannot express our sorrow. We hold you and the girls in Love. Rose and Chuck

**Rose Frantzen** - September 18, 2023 at 12:47 AM



“ My heart aches for the loss of TJ. I will always remember TJ as an energetic neighbor always with a smile and something up his sleeve. You will be forever missed but you left everyone with wonderful memories that being a smile❤️💙 Tanya Wilkinson

**Tanya Wilkinson** - September 17, 2023 at 02:59 PM



“ Kevin Julie McKinney lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer



Kevin & Julie McKinney - September 16, 2023 at 10:43 PM



“ Father - Large Memorial Stone was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.



September 16, 2023 at 01:20 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.

September 16, 2023 at 01:20 PM



“ Father - Large Memorial Stone was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.



September 16, 2023 at 01:17 PM



“ *Father - Large Memorial Stone was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.*



---

September 16, 2023 at 01:14 PM



“ *A Full Life was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.*



---

September 14, 2023 at 04:35 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.*

---

September 14, 2023 at 04:35 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.*

---

September 14, 2023 at 04:26 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.*



---

September 14, 2023 at 12:03 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.*



---

September 14, 2023 at 12:45 AM



“ *Our sympathies to TJ's family. Such a tragic loss.*

---

**Angie Farrell** - September 13, 2023 at 11:39 PM



“ *Kris Manteufel lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer*



---

**Kris Manteufel** - September 13, 2023 at 11:38 PM



“ *TJ's family ~ our thoughts and prayers are with all of you during this difficult time. Our hearts break with this loss. May your memories surround you and bring a measure of comfort! Blessings ~ the Manteufels*

---

**Kris Manteufel** - September 13, 2023 at 11:36 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.*

---

September 13, 2023 at 10:56 PM

PG

“ A CANDLE HAS BEEN LIT IN MEMORY OF YOUR HUSBAND & DAD, TYLER SCHAEFER. PRAYERS FOR ALL OF YOU. MAY HE RIP. KNEW YOUR GRANDPARENTS.



JOY, PEACE & LOVE, LARY & PATTY GUNVILLE  
STORM LAKE, IOWA

---

**PATTY GUNVILLE** - September 13, 2023 at 08:18 PM

JF

“ Judy & Dean Sitzmann and family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.



---

**Judy & Dean Sitzmann and family** - September 13, 2023 at 11:34 AM

JF

“ Judy & Dean Sitzmann and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.

---

**Judy & Dean Sitzmann and family** - September 13, 2023 at 11:34 AM

LK

“ My heart goes out to you Jolene and girls. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

---

**LaVonne Kahler** - September 13, 2023 at 11:26 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.*



---

September 13, 2023 at 10:41 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tyler John "TJ" Schaefer.

---

September 13, 2023 at 10:41 AM



“ *Our sympathy and prayers to Josie and the girls. TJ will forever be in our memories as an outstanding teacher, coach, friend and father. An authentic caring person that cared so much for others. He touched so many lives as an educator and a friend.*

---

**Bill Walters** - September 13, 2023 at 10:27 AM



“ *Deepest sympathy. TJ was a great dad. Cherish the memories. Prayers and Deepest sympathy.*



---

**Richard and Marti Rose** - September 13, 2023 at 12:42 AM

GJ

“ *Our sympathies to all of TJ's family. John and Gayle Johnson*



Gayle Johnson - September 12, 2023 at 05:32 PM

TM

“ *Our sympathies to all TJ's Family and Friends. Doug & Tamie Mummert*

Tamie Mummert - September 13, 2023 at 10:11 AM

TC

“ *Our sympathy to all of the family.*



Terry and Cathy Coombs - September 12, 2023 at 03:31 PM



“ *Pat Bjorkgren lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer*



Pat Bjorkgren - September 12, 2023 at 01:18 PM

RB

“ Renee Buddenhagen lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer



Renee Buddenhagen - September 12, 2023 at 12:02 PM

AS

“ Alta-Aurelia School lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer



Alta-Aurelia Community School - September 12, 2023 at 11:35 AM

DM

“ Deepest Sympathy to the families of TJ , May he rest in Peace

Duane Mummert - September 11, 2023 at 11:00 PM

JL

“ Jen Launderville lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer



Jen Launderville - September 11, 2023 at 07:57 PM

DS

“ I just lost my wife Shirley Stucynski on the 5th. I am so sorry for your loss to the family. My prayers are for all the family at this time. God Bless

Dewyne R Stucynski - September 11, 2023 at 07:47 PM

DS

“ Dewyne Stucynski lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer



Dewyne R Stucynski - September 11, 2023 at 07:41 PM

BE

We are so sorry. TJ was such a great person, Everyone admired that young man. A great son, husband, Daddy, and friend.

Barb and Dar Evans - September 12, 2023 at 10:36 PM

DA

I am so sorry to hear of the loss of TJ. I babysat Jackie when she was little. I enjoyed having their family as friends. When they came back they would bring Jackie to visit. I even met Jocelyn as a baby at Littlefield's Park when they came out and saw us there. My heart breaks for Josie and girls. It's very sad and I am very sorry for the loss of TJ.

Denise Asberry - September 13, 2023 at 11:31 PM

TK

“ Terry and lit a candle in memory of Tyler John Schaefer



Terry and Kim - September 11, 2023 at 05:38 PM

CW

“ *Praying for you at this difficult time. TJ was such a nice guy and will be missed by all. May he Rest in Peace. Cheryl and Delbert Winterhof*

---

**Cheryl Winterhof** - September 11, 2023 at 03:17 PM