



## Vern Varenhorst

October 26, 1922 - November 3, 2017

Long time Storm Lake businessman, LaVerne C. Varenhorst, age 95, died Friday, November 3, 2017 at his home surrounded by his family.

A memorial service will be held Wednesday, November 8, 2017 from 6-9:00 p.m. at the Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home 1615 W Milwaukee Ave, Storm Lake. Donations in his honor to either Unity Point at Home Hospice, 112 West 5th Street, Storm Lake, IA 50588 or Brushy Creek Area Honor Flight, 320 South 12th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501 would be appreciated.

Vern was born October 26, 1922, the youngest child of Frank and Lydia Varenhorst of LeMars, Iowa. He attended school in LeMars, graduating as valedictorian of LeMars High School in 1941.

In December 1942, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and assigned to the 14th Armored Tanks Division at Fort Smith, Arkansas. While there he learned of the pilot testing program. After passing the entrance test, he began flight training to become a B-17 co-pilot. From November 1944, through March 1945, 1st Lieutenant Varenhorst successfully completed 25 bombing missions as part of the 447th Bomb Group of the 8th Army Air Corps.

While in England he met Margaret Mary "Jane" Butler. They were married June 16, 1945 in her hometown of Keighley, Yorkshire, England. After the war, they made their home in LeMars where Vern worked at the B&B Store. In 1959 they moved their family of five children to Storm Lake when he went into business for himself. Vern's Variety opened in August of that year in space formerly occupied by Wallen's Variety Store. Ten years later, the business expanded and opened as Vern's in a new, larger location at 702 Lake Avenue. Within a few years, it expanded again with the opening of a second store, J. Varenhorst Fabrics. In 1983, J. Varenhorst Fabrics became the dominant focus of Vern and Jane's business partnership. He continued to operate J. Varenhorst Fabrics after Jane's death in 1995 until its closure in December, 2015. After a 78-year-career in retail

that started when he was a high school stock boy at the B&B Store, he decided to retire.

Outside of business, Vern was devoted to his family. He loved planning an annual family vacation and as a result, his children have fond memories of trips that took them across the United States, Canada, and Europe. Often there was an extended family component that included visiting far-flung aunts and uncles, or cousins along the way. As his children married and started their own families, he and Jane had new reasons to travel. They never missed grandparent's days, First Communion, baptisms, musical performances, sporting events, graduations, or weddings. He was an honored guest at many of his great-grandchildren's special events. He recently celebrated his 95th Birthday with two parties: one in July with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren and another October 28 with his children and their spouses.

He is survived by his daughters, Margaret (Stan) Krol of Sellersburg, IN and Rachel (David) Schmid of Cincinnati, OH; his sons Michael (Irene) of Wichita, KS; Stephen (Teresa) of Wayne, PA; and Mark (Teresa) of Port Orchard, WA; 19 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; and dearest friend, Margaret Ireland.

He is also survived by his late wife's family: sister-in-law, Sheila Thompson and brother-in-law, Joseph Neff, both of St. Joseph, MO and Colin (Valerie) Butler and Farrell (Molly) Butler in England along with many nieces and nephews.

Vern was preceded in death by his wife, Jane; daughter-in-law, Deborah Pitstick Varenhorst; his parents, Frank and Lydia; and siblings, Benedict (Marjorie), Frank, and Alma. He was also predeceased by Jane's sisters and brothers-in-law, Winifred and John Addyman, Patricia and John Hodgson, and Eileen Neff.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 8. 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home - Storm Lake

1615 W Milwaukee Ave,

Storm Lake, IA 50588

(712) 732-1911

[jensenfuneralhomes@gmail.com](mailto:jensenfuneralhomes@gmail.com)

<https://www.fratzkejensen.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Vern Varenhorst*



Fratzke & Jensen Funeral Home - November 08, 2017 at 03:22 PM



“ *Simply Lily was purchased for the family of Vern Varenhorst.*



November 10, 2017 at 02:48 PM



“ *My deepest sympathy to the Varenhorst family on the loss of your father. I have very fond memories of working for your parents as one of my first jobs during high school.*

*Marcia Dean-Pepper  
Class of 1971*

MARCIA DEAN-PEPPER - November 08, 2017 at 01:17 PM



“ *MARCIA DEAN-PEPPER lit a candle in memory of Vern Varenhorst*



MARCIA DEAN-PEPPER - November 08, 2017 at 01:13 PM

CB

“ Our sympathy to Varenhorst family - especially to Steve, who we knew in Fargo at NDSU in the early 70's! I think Chris and Steve(or Varney, as we used to call him) played foosball together at Stockbridge Hall. And then we ended up in your Dad's hometown of Le Mars as a photographer after Chris worked as Mechanical Engineer for 2 years. Your Dad looks like someone we would have enjoyed knowing! Chris and Barb Becker - Le Mars, IA [www.cphotoltd.com](http://www.cphotoltd.com)

Chris & Barb Becker - November 08, 2017 at 12:20 PM



“ Healing Tears - Blue and White was purchased for the family of Vern Varenhorst.



November 08, 2017 at 10:06 AM

NG

“ The staff of Stephen Varenhorst's office would like to offer our sincere condolences to the Varenhorst family. As a tribute to, and in honor of Vern Varenhorst, we are making a gift to the care staff of Unity Point Home Hospice in Storm Lake, IA.

Neil Garrioch - November 08, 2017 at 09:23 AM



“ Jennifer Newton lit a candle in memory of Vern Varenhorst



Jennifer Newton - November 07, 2017 at 09:16 PM



“ Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Vern Varenhorst.



November 07, 2017 at 02:20 PM



“ Peace, Prayers, & Blessings- Lavender and White was purchased for the family of Vern Varenhorst.



November 07, 2017 at 09:27 AM

GR

“ Our sympathies to the Varenhorst family. Vern was a great friend to our dad, Robert (Doc) Richardson. They were well known around the area in their circle of great restaurants. With Robert's failing eye sight, we always appreciated Vern providing transportation for our dad.

Gary Richardson  
Council Bluffs

Gary Richardson - November 06, 2017 at 03:56 PM

AK

“ Adam And Angie Kutz lit a candle in memory of Vern Varenhorst



Adam and Angie Kutz - November 06, 2017 at 12:40 PM

TM

“ Tammy Miller lit a candle in memory of Vern Varenhorst



Tammy Miller - November 06, 2017 at 10:04 AM



“ Healing Tears - All White was purchased for the family of Vern Varenhorst.



November 06, 2017 at 09:58 AM

AJ

“ *Amy Johnson lit a candle in memory of Vern Varenhorst*



**Amy Johnson** - November 05, 2017 at 06:58 PM

GD

“ *Gail DeMan lit a candle in memory of Vern Varenhorst*



**Gail DeMan** - November 05, 2017 at 02:53 PM

JM

“ *Your Dad always had a friendly smile and a lovely conversation when I would stop in the fabric store on All State Audition day each fall. He will be missed....  
John and Linda Mertz*

**John and Linda Mertz** - November 05, 2017 at 12:41 PM



“ *Sally Rassler lit a candle in memory of Vern Varenhorst*



**Sally Rassler** - November 04, 2017 at 09:17 PM

FV

“ *Fondly, Ellen Varenhorst purchased the Serene Greentm Bouquet For Sympathy for the family of Vern Varenhorst.*



**Fondly, Ellen Varenhorst** - November 04, 2017 at 05:06 PM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Vern Varenhorst.*



November 04, 2017 at 02:01 PM

BM

“ *To the Varenhorst Family--- My sincere condolences on the passing of your Father. May he RIP. God Bless Your Family. Love, Bonnie Mester*

**BoNNIE MESTER** - November 04, 2017 at 01:58 PM

BE

“ *Margaret and Rachel, I am so sorry to learn of your father's passing. All your families are in my heart and in my prayers at this time. Beth Eloie-Reep*

**Beth Eloie** - November 03, 2017 at 10:25 PM

WC

“ *Of all the people in Storm Lake, Vern means more to me than most. In fact the whole family does. Vern gave me my first job - temporary help for Ridiculous Days - and then summer employment as a cashier. Most fun was setting up the new fabric store. Vern, Jane, and of course my dear friend Margaret have meant the world to me. I was always welcomed as a member of the family. I sincerely hoped I would see Vern one more time at our upcoming reunion next year. I will have to wait longer now. Love you Vern, Jane, Margaret, Rachel, Mike, Steve, Mark.*

**wendy cooke** - November 03, 2017 at 07:22 PM



“ Dear Varenhorst family,  
Tim & I send our deepest sympathy. We have lost one "class act." He greeted everyone with such a warm genuine smile and his deep, throw-back-your-head laugh just invited you to chuckle along. His love and pride in his family was evident in the way his eyes would shine talking about the kids and then their grandkids and now the greats. The love of "Jane and Vern" and how they obviously enjoyed each other and encouraged each other's gifts and passions is another life lesson for us all. Vern's dedication to Jane even in the difficult days represents how for better and for worse, in sickness and in health is demonstrated in authentic relationships.  
Warm hugs to you all!  
Tim and Mary (Minnie) Moothart

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**Mary Moothart** - November 03, 2017 at 06:20 PM

PG

“ A CANDLE HAS BEEN LIT IN MEMORY OF VERN. OUR SYMPATHY & PRAYERS TO HIS FAMILY. MAY HE REST IN PEACE.

LARY & PATTY GUNVILLE  
STORM LAKE, IOWA



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**PATTY GUNVILLE** - November 03, 2017 at 05:56 PM