

**Douglas Jean Johns (Doug)** and his twin sister, Donna Jane, were born to Robert Henry Johns Sr. and Luella May (Lang) Johns on March 1, 1932, in Ackley, Iowa.

At 3:03 p.m. on August 8, 2025, in perfect synchronicity with the “Amen” of The Lord’s Prayer spoken by a prayer circle holding hands around his hospital bed, Doug left this physical world at the age of 93 after being ill for just a few days.

The youngest of nine children, Doug grew up in the Ackley/Eldora area, where he enjoyed time with his siblings and extended family, summer swims at Pine Lake, and competing in football and track. When his family moved to Colo, Iowa, during his junior year of high school, he continued his love for sports—and deepened his connection with a special classmate, Sylvia Jean Cable. During their senior year, Doug and Sylvia were crowned Colo Football Homecoming King and Queen, foreshadowing the lifetime partnership that lay ahead.

Doug and Sylvia were married on September 30, 1950, at St. Mary’s Church in Marshalltown, Iowa. Their marriage was a love story that lasted well beyond the words “until death do us part.” After Sylvia’s passing on Christmas Eve 1988, Doug continued to wear the wedding band she had placed on his finger on their wedding day nearly seventy-five years ago—a symbol of his devotion that he never removed.

The couple bought a modest three-room home in Colo on April 1, 1955. With his hammer in hand—and with help from his brother-in-law Dick—Doug set about creating the space needed to raise their three children. Doug began working for the Iowa State Highway Commission (later the Iowa Department of Transportation) on November 2, 1953. For 39 years, he took pride in his role as Highway Maintenance Supervisor, working with both the Ames and Colo DOT Maintenance Shops, until retiring on September 10, 1992. Many Christmas mornings at home were delayed by snow removal duties as he and his crew worked to ensure roads were safe for holiday travelers. Doug never complained; he took his responsibilities seriously, made sure the job was done well, and enjoyed the camaraderie of his co-workers.

Doug lived by the unwritten code of his remarkable generation: honor your parents, respect your elders, love your country, care for your family and friends, practice your faith, serve your community, work hard, save for a rainy day, take pride in your home, and take pride in your appearance—hair freshly cut and neatly combed, clothes pressed, and shoes polished.

Doug loved being an active part of the Colo community. While balancing a family and job he also joined neighbors in the continuous concrete pour for the new elevator on Main Street, served on the Colo City Council and the Methodist Church Board, led a local Boy Scout troop, and provided play-by-play for Colo High School football games.

Doug cherished life’s simple pleasures: golfing in the DOT league and with Sylvia, fishing at a nearby lake with his kids, family birthday parties, grilling with neighbors on warm summer evenings, family vacations to Minnesota and Colorado, and some serious couples bridge games. He looked forward to every 4th of July family gathering—a tradition started by his parents to bring their large immediate and extended family members together each year. As this tradition carried forward for Doug’s family, he brought the steaks for grilling and made the ice cream—enjoying a cold beer along with his tasks. The fireworks display and homemade pie with his ice cream finished the day perfectly. Each Thanksgiving day found Doug carving the turkey—making the dogs at his feet happy by dropping them some samples. Over the years, Christmas joy for him simply meant a houseful of excited kids, a beautifully lit tree, favorite sweets, preparing divinity, frosting cookies with the kids, and receiving beautiful Christmas cards with photos and notes from family and friends.

Grandchildren were among his and Sylvia’s greatest joys. In truth, the love flowed both ways. Whether attending their school events, celebrating birthdays and holidays, taking the yearly trip to Adventureland, or simply sharing snacks and games at their home, Doug and Sylvia made sure their grandchildren knew how deeply they were loved.

In retirement, Doug found community in his morning coffee group at the Country House Café and at lunches with friends at the Colo Senior Citizens’ Center. As friends and family passed and life’s challenges increased, Doug stayed positive and fiercely independent—never complaining or feeling sorry for himself. He set a purpose for each day, whether it was picking up the mail, cleaning a room, doing laundry, buying groceries, cooking, exercising, mowing or shoveling, washing the car, cleaning windows, or checking on family. Those who knew Doug knew he moved quickly to complete his daily plan—and nothing interrupted it. His home was spotless, his lawn perfectly manicured—earning him the Colo Business Association Award—and his pride in

his property never wavered. He mowed his own yard until this summer, when he reluctantly passed the task on to someone else.

Doug stayed current with seasonal sports—especially those of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren—as well as college and professional football, golf, and basketball. Recently, he followed Caitlin Clark and Athletes Unlimited Women’s Pro Softball. He embraced new technology, enjoying his iPhone, iPad, and Apple Watch. Streaming provided an ongoing challenge, but he navigated news, sports, and favorite old movies with determination.

The arrival of great-grandchildren (ages 2 to 22) brought even more joy to his later years. He loved holding and feeding them as babies, playfully teasing them in the highchair next to his seat at the table, and watching them run, play, and chatter. As they grew, he supported their interests and activities—attending as many events as possible and proudly wearing every team sweatshirt and cap they gave him.

Doug was preceded in death by his wife, Sylvia; his three brothers: Paul (Leona), Robert Jr. (Marge), Marvin “Bud” (Lorna); four sisters: Grace (Harvey) Sietsema, LaVonne (Lowell “Fuzz”) Johnson, Pearl (Arthur) Thompson, and Donna (George Abbas, John) Doyen; in-laws Richard “Dick” (Harriet/Leona) Cable, Jim (Claire) Cable, Bob (Joanne) Cable, Doris (Harold) Smith, Beverly (Larry) Patterson, Susan Schlueter; and daughter-in-law Renee Johns.

He is survived by one sister, Charlane Tanner (96); three children, Karen (Scott) Berka, Deborah (Dave) Pettis, and Steven Johns (Susan Bauer, significant other); seven grandchildren, Myndie Berka, Bret Berka (Laura Berg, significant other), Ben (Emily) Berka, Jennifer (Mike) Schallert, Elizabeth Arnold, Brian (Ali) Johns, and Stacia (Lupe) Laguna; sixteen great-grandchildren—Sylvia, Daniel, Kaleb, Luna, Maya, and Arya Berka; Jameson and Cole Berka; Lily and Leslie Arnold; Myles, Olivia, and Everet Schallert; Beau and Cruz Laguna; Ada Johns; brothers-in-law John (Diane) Cable, Jerry (Judy) Cable, Greg Schulter; and many nieces, nephews, caring neighbors, and friends who will miss his friendly ways.

Doug’s life was one of humble, quiet strength, steadfast faith, and unwavering devotion—to his wife, his family, his friends, and the community he called home. He asked for little and gave much, leaving behind a legacy of integrity, kindness, and service. Those who knew him will remember the twinkle in his eye, the way he made everyone feel welcome, and the example he set simply by the way he lived. In his 93 years, Doug taught by doing—showing that love is proven in the everyday moments, that hard work is its own reward, and that faith carries us through every season. On August 8, 2025, as the final “Amen” was spoken, he took his last breath on earth and his first in heaven—reunited with Sylvia, siblings, and friends, and surrounded by the love that shaped his life.

A funeral service for Douglas will be 11 a.m. Friday, August 22, 2025, at the Colo United Methodist Church in Colo with Pastor Nikki Ross-Bishop officiating. The family will greet friends beginning at 10 a.m. until the time of the service. Interment will be at the Colo Cemetery in Colo.

Memorials may be made to the Colo United Methodist Church or to Suncrest Hospice in memory of Douglas. Rasmusson-Ryan Funeral Home in Nevada is handling arrangements. Condolences may be shared with the family online at [www.rasmussonfh.com](http://www.rasmussonfh.com).