

Mark Schuyler Farren (1957-2015)

Obituary From Adams Soderstrum Funeral Home, Story County, Iowa.

Mark Schuyler Farren was born April 23, 1957, to Richard and Marguerite (Oswalt) Farren in Nevada, Iowa. Mark was preceded in death by both of his parents and brother-in-law, Tim Dykstra.

Mark graduated from Colo High School in 1975 and attended Des Moines Area Community College. After the passing of his father in 1975, Mark took over the family farm. Mark married his high school sweetheart Julie (Lehman), of Collins, on April 8, 1978 and they settled in Colo. Mark followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Colo Fire Department in 1976, where he served as chief for 32 years. Mark loved helping others and was passionate about serving the community through the fire department.

Those who knew Mark knew he was a man of many talents. Along with farming and fire department involvement, he worked several years at Iowa Donor Network, the organ and tissue procurement for the state of Iowa.

Mark's vision for the fire department and serving his community led him to build fire apparatus' with Bob Jamison for the Colo Fire Department and eventually build custom fire trucks for other departments. Mark was a very progressive and forward thinker who was constantly looking for ways to improve the fire department.

Mark's children and grandchildren were the joy of his life. Until his illness, he rarely missed any of their school or sporting activities. Mark was a member of Cornerstone Church of Ames. The relationships he formed at Cornerstone were a treasure to him.

After a heroic battle with cancer, Mark passed away at 58 years of age on Sunday, July 5, 2015, surrounded by loved ones at the Israel Hospice Home in Ames, Iowa.

Mark is survived by his wife, Julie Farren of Colo. Born to this union were five daughters, Kira (Rob) Nelson of Roland, Kylee (Brad) Fleming of Nevada, Taylor (Kaleb) Appelgate of Marshalltown and Madison and McKenna Farren of Colo. Mark was blessed by six grandchildren, Jack, Farren and Wayne Nelson, Braiden and Weston Fleming and Liam Appelgate. Mark is also survived by two sisters, Patty Dykstra of Newton and Jeannie (Roger) Bellinghausen of Newell; along with many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial fund has been established in loving memory of Mark at State Bank and Trust in Colo.

MARK FARREN: A LIFE DEDICATED TO COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mark Farren of Colo, Iowa, has been a significant member of the Iowa fire service since 1978. For well over thirty of those years, he has been Chief of Colo Fire and Rescue. During his term as Chief the department has rapidly evolved from being a competent, small-town Iowa fire department to recognition as one of the most progressive, enterprising and competent small fire agencies in the Midwest.

Under Chief Farren's leadership, Colo Fire and Rescue has set the pace for innovation and emergency scene performance. They were the first fire department in Story County to carry vehicle extrication equipment; they trained tirelessly and for many years provided the only motor vehicle rescue service within a 25-mile radius. In the process of achieving a highly regarded reputation, the department introduced new extrication concepts (such as pre-connected, remote-start and remote controlled tools) as much as a decade in advance of the fire service in general.

Chief Farren also spearheaded an ambitious program of fire apparatus modernization. The Colo department fabricated virtually every piece of its apparatus. Starting with the first fire department-based ambulance in Story County, members of the department (notably, including the Chief, himself) substantially modified or built from the ground up one of the finest, best-maintained fleets of modern apparatus in the state. The image of solidarity, unit pride, and professional dedication it projects is second to none.

Inspired by its Chief, the department is also well known for responding to changing fire department responsibilities with new, leading edge solutions. Among these were a trailer carried vehicle for accessing and transporting equipment to remote railroad emergencies, a floatation system for responding to ice, water and flood incidents, a vehicle that served as a water tanker at rural fires and provided ladder truck functions in the city, and most recently creation of a special operations trailer for the transport of equipment required in hazardous materials, technical rescue, multiple casualty events and other specialized incidents.

To his great credit, Chief Farren always kept the spotlight focused on the achievements of his department. However, individually, he has also contributed immeasurably to the evolution of Story County fire and emergency medical services at large. Unbeknownst to most, he recognized the problems posed by the mismatched unit designations used by surrounding fire departments. In response, he promoted the concept of a unified, countywide apparatus designation system and, ultimately developed and refined a numeral system for achieving it. On another front, Chief Farren was an active participant in the development of Story County's unified 9-1-1 emergency communications system. As a separate, but critically important contribution to this system, he also championed development and countywide adoption of a revolutionary new communication system that literally placed portable, ultra long-range radio communications in the hands of the majority of firefighters and medical responders in the county.

Funeral Service

JUL 8. 10:00 AM

Cornerstone Church of Ames

56829 US Highway 30

Ames, IA, US, 50010

Graveside Service

JUL 8. 11:15 AM

Colo Cemetery

701 US 65

Colo, IA, US, 50056