

Gerald “Jerry” Jans, age 71 of Hawarden, IA, passed away peacefully on July 16, 2025, at Ava’s House in Sioux Falls, SD. Jerry was born March 6, 1954, in Sibley, IA, to Kenneth and Darlene Jans. He went to high school in Little Rock, IA, and graduated in 1972.

Following high school, Jerry went to Westmar College in Le Mars, IA, where he played basketball and baseball for the Eagles. In 1976 he earned his B.A. in Social Secondary Divisional in Secondary Education. It was at college where he met a lovely young woman, Donna Houtsma, while out with his friend and the two of them married after graduating. Jerry and Donna recently celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary.

Jerry and Donna had two children, Cody and Caitlin. Jerry spent endless hours playing basketball in their driveway with Cody, shooting at their hoop Jerry swore was set to the regulation ten feet high even though the rim sat closer to eleven feet from the ground. He still greatly helped Cody with his gameplay skills and enjoyed watching his son compete.

Jerry attended Caitlin’s choir performances and clapped as loudly as he could mostly when appropriate. He never was afraid to be loud, even if it meant unleashing an untimely cough during a recital. While he was not a singer himself, he was proud to listen to his daughter sing.

Jerry spent most of his career teaching. He taught at school districts in Melvin, IA (1978-1979), Klemme, IA (1979-1983), Adair, IA (1983-1985), and Hawarden (1985-2002).

Jerry treasured coaching basketball and baseball at both the high school and junior high level. In addition to basketball and baseball he coached football, track and field, and golf.

Jerry cherished his grandchildren, Rowan and Ryker. He would do whatever he could to spend time with them. Each autumn he raked enormous leaf piles and delighted in hearing them laugh and giggle while they leaped into them.

The Boston Celtics were Jerry’s one true team. When the Celtics won their 18th NBA championship in 2024 he was thrilled they moved one championship ahead of the Los Angeles Lakers.

Jerry was preceded in death by his parents, Kenneth and Darlene Jans, and brother, Kevin Jans.

He is survived by his wife, Donna Jans (Houtsma); son, Cody Jans and his wife Neena Hayreh; daughter, Caitlin Jans; and grandchildren, Rowan Hoogland and Ryker Hoogland.

Remembering The Life Of Gerald “Jerry” Jans

March 6, 1954 ~ July 16, 2025

GATHERING OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 9, 2025

Oak Grove Lodge

Oak Grove Park

Hawarden, Iowa

Celebrating The Life Of
Gerald "Jerry" Jans



March 6, 1954
July 16, 2025

