John Richard Plotz

Dick passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family, on January 15, 2025, at the age of 84 and was reunited in heaven with the "love of his life", Joan Kay.

He was born on February 24, 1940, to Godfrey and Lucille Plotz.

Memories of his life will be cherished by many, because of his influence in their lives as a husband, a father, a grandpa, a great-grandpa, a father-in-law, a brother, an uncle, a cousin, a friend, a colleague and a Corporal in the United States Marines.

Dick is survived by his four children: Debie (John) Koneck, Mark Plotz (Laurie Ketchum Plotz) Kelli (Dan) Klein and Amy (Brian) Kleist. He will be deeply missed by his grandchildren, Ashley Klein (Matthew Holmen), Robert (Ellen) Koneck, Jacob (Lacey) Plotz, Aaron (Kalani) Plotz, Ryan Kleist, Samantha Leverett, Andrew Kleist, Matthew Kleist, and Steven Kleist. He was blessed and proud to have 9 great-grandchildren; John, Harleigh, Emmett, Brycen, Everly, Wallace, Arthur, Luka and Brooks.

Dick was the oldest of 8 siblings, followed by Mike Plotz (Betty Leerar Bublitz), Janice (Jim) Armstrong, Doug (Candy) Plotz, Tonda (Jerry) Ashby, Tom Plotz, Terry (Dianna) Plotz, Tim Plotz. He was also blessed with many nieces and nephews.

Dick was preceded in death by his wife, Joan Plotz, his parents, Godfrey and Lucille Plotz, his siblings, Terry Plotz, Tom Plotz and Tonda Ashby.

EULOGY

John Richard Plotz, known as "Dick", was born on February 24, 1940 at Mercy Hospital, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Lucille and Godfrey Plotz.

He was the oldest of 7 children.

He married the love of his life, Joan, on December 28, 1958.

He said that he knew she would be his wife the first time he met her. He said that she filled up a room with her smile and laughter and was full of life and personality!

He fell in love with her energy, her passion, her attitude and her mischievousness! He said he constantly told her how beautiful she was, that she was "his girl" and that everyone in high school and their town, knew it!

Dick and Joan began their life in Cedar Rapids. Shortly after they were married, they moved to Twentynine Palms, California, where he proudly served in the United States Marine Corp.

After his service in the Marines, they returned to Cedar Rapids for a short time, before they moved to Minnesota, which became their permanent residence and where they raised their four children, Debie, Mark, Kelli and Amy.

Over the years, they had homes in Roseville, White Bear Lake, Stacy, Kost and Stillwater. One of their dreams was to live on a "hobby farm", which came true!

Their second dream was to live on a lake so that they could fish and ride around in their boat! That dream was fulfilled when they moved to their final home in Center City.

Throughout their years, they enjoyed their time together attending their children's school events and extracurricular activities, riding their horses, caring for their dogs, cats and other farm animals, tending to their big gardens, bowling on their couples league, having friends over for "card nights" and snuggling on the couch with a big bowl of popcorn and chocolate, while watching VHS movies! In between all of those fun activities, they found the time for trips to Las Vegas and trying their luck at Minnesota's local casinos!

Dick was the primary provider for his family of six. He followed in his grandfather and father's footsteps and began "wrapping" for a meat department in Cedar Rapids where he eventually became a meat cutter.

During his meat cutting career in Minnesota, he worked for Kroger Foods and Country Club Market.

Shortly after formally retiring, he realized he enjoyed working and spending time with his fellow colleagues, so he returned as needed, filling in at Super Value, Cub and County Market stores.

He built his reputation not only on his work ethic, but his skills, his commitment, his loyalty and his friendly demeanor.

To this day, many still speak of him with respect and have shared stories of their time with him.

Dick also shared his work ethic with his family and on many occasions, reminded them that the only time he missed work was when he crushed his ankle in a riding accident with his "purebred quarter horse"

He missed six weeks of work. Prior to this accident, he had never missed a shift or called in sick. He was very proud of this achievement.

Dick worked as much as he could, including weekends, to support his family and to provide them with the opportunity to live in the country, on a hobby farm.

This included a work commute of 30-50 miles, one way. He traveled through snow and ice storms, up to 50 below wind chills, tornadoes and he often drove a vehicle without heat or air!

These work commutes created another group of acquaintances for dad ..... his "CB Radio" friends. This was the next best thing to a cell phone in the early 70's!

He set up a very large base station in the family home, so that he could communicate with his family while traveling. His "handle" was "Butcher Boy".

He and Joan named their home base CB Radio, "Liberty Acres", the same name they gave their hobby farm.

The name of "Liberty Acres" was chosen because of their faith and inspired by 2 Corinthians 3:17 which says "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"

Dick was also a very supportive husband and encouraged Joan, as she pursued her various interests and career choices.

This included her innate ability to purchase and sell antiques and shop for deals, her gift of drawing and painting and her faith and commitment to missionary work.

As she contemplated getting her GED later in life, he encouraged her to pursue it and was so proud of her when she continued to go on to college where she received her LPN Nursing degree.

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The man they called “Grandpa” was very important to all 9 of his grandchildren, including the grandchildren he received through marriage and significant others!

He would always say “I really have 13 grandchildren” !

Whether it was phone calls, ball games, lacrosse games, dance recitals, fishing, honks of the car as they passed his house, phone calls, prom’s, graduations, weddings, family holidays and gatherings,

he always loved spending time and catching up with his grandchildren!!

Grandpa also adopted” a few grandchildren along the way!

Some were as far away as Denmark and others were friends of his grandchildren, who only knew him as “Grandpa”.

When they asked him how they should address him, he would say “Grandpa” ! Although…. a few of them did call him Dickie !

The man they called "Great Papa” or “Great Grandpa”, was a man who lit up when he saw his little great-grandchildren!

He would gently hold them in his arms when they were babies and he was silly and would laugh and play with them as they grew into toddlers.

It goes without saying that if allowed, he always had their favorite candy on hand!

His only regret was that Joan was not here to meet her great grandchildren.

If you asked Dick about his daughter-in-law and son-in-laws, he would tell you, that to him, they were sons and daughters.

Although it was in his nature to give John, Dan and Brian a hard time, he talked about each one of them with love, respect and pride and he always appreciated the time that they each took to help him in different ways!

Dick said he always looked forward to his phone calls with his only daughter-in-law, Laurie! He said she was full of energy and he had fun visiting with her and getting updates about his family in Florida! It meant so much to him that she consistently took the time to check in on him!

A few years ago, Dick was given a book. The title of the book was,

"Dad, I want to hear your story".

To be honest, he liked the concept of the book, but was not excited about reading the question, then having to write his answer in a book!

However, he was happy to let someone else read him the question, listen to his story then write down his answer!

Below are a few of his answers to those questions. They are "choppy", but documented in his own words.

Who were you named after?

* I was named after my dad, his middle name was John. Dad wanted to name me Godfrey, after him, but Mom said "NO"

What are some of your favorite foods?

* My favorite ice cream is Rum Cherry,

* I like my eggs cooked over easy

* My favorite sandwich is an "Open hot beef sandwich with gravy and potatoes"

* I prefer cleaning up vs cooking

* I do not have any allergies or fears.

What were you like during your teenage years?

* I was calm, not wild. I wore Levi jeans most of the time. I wore my hair in a "duck ass style". I did not have a curfew. I never went to any high school dances.

* My dad taught me how to drive. I learned in a "51" Kaiser. They do not make them anymore. They made nice sports cars.

* I bought my first car when I was 16 years old. It was a "49" Oldsmobile. I wish I had kept it, it would be worth $50,000 dollars today.

* Elvis Presley was popular in high school. In fact, I bought a pair of blue suede shoes. I liked Buddy Holly too

* My grades were normal, B's, C's and A's. Once I got a D in trigonometry. I never took it again, it was "too darn hard".

Which of your siblings were you closest to?

* Probably Mike, we were closest in age

What was your favorite song?

* Chubby Checker, "The Twist"

*

What were some of your first jobs?

My first job was in a bakery scrubbing pots, pans and cookie sheets. I was 13 years old. I think I was paid 35 cents an hour. The bakery owner said we could take home as much as we wanted to eat at the end of the day.

In recent years, Dick told Amy that his boss was smart. After one week, he was sick of bakery items and didn't want to eat anymore! He found out later that she deducted the cost of the food he ate that first week from his paycheck!

Continuing with Dicks description of his jobs…..

* For my second job I worked in a shoe store (This could have prompted his obsession with shoes!)

* My least favorite job was in the service. I worked at a rock quarry.

I set dynamite in the quarry and blew it up.

We would drill 6 different places, then load it by hand,

One time it didn't light right. I remember my boss yelling "Get out of there"

I ran, but the explosion threw me! My boots blew off my feet!

After that, I used my cigarette to light the dynamite!

Dick stayed connected with several of his life long friends, Roxy, Bob, Chuckie and Gary.

He also maintained his friendships with his meat-cutter friends, Louie, Dick Tesch and many more.

The daughter of one of Dick's friends from work, Dick Tesch, recently said, "My dad speaks so fondly of the time he spent with your Dad at Country Club Market.

The pranks, the jokes, the laughs, the pride he had for his children, and his love for his wife".

His high school friend, Bob said, " I tried to call Dick at least once a month. We usually talked about "old times", his health and his family.

He never complained about being sick.

Every time we talked, he talked about his family. He was so proud of all of you, especially his grandchildren! He also talked about how good you all

were to him and how you were "right there" to help whenever he needed help.

Bob also wanted to share a few memories with all of you.

The following is Bob's first memory of Dick:

Dick had a neighbor, John Huston. John was a large football player.

There were two other "tough guys" in Cedar Rapids

So… one day, as Dick and Johnny were sitting at a stop light, Johnny gave his beer to Dick and said "hold this, I have something to do".

Johnny gets out of the car, knocks both guys off their motorcycles and pushes the bikes to the ground Johnny gets back in the car laughing and they feel great about getting "one up" on the tough guys.

Two weeks later, Dick was sitting at a stop sign, in his car, looking over to the right when he saw the tough guys next to him.

Dick thought, "oh, oh, those guys are going to whip my butt". They looked at each other, nodded their heads and took off.

I guess through association, they wanted no part of Johnny and his friends!

The following is Bob's second memory he wanted to share with everyone today:

There was a place in Cedar Rapids called "The Dance Land". It was the hangout for young people. It was on the 2nd floor, above the bowling alley.

There was a landing halfway up the stairs. Dick went up the stairs to Dance Land, where he found the "tough guys" in a fight. They saw Dick and said "watch our backs".

When they said that, someone slugged Dick in the face and Dick fell down the stairs, past the landing and he landed at the entrance on the street level.

As he laid at the bottom, a policeman walked up and said, "I see you are in trouble again Plotz" and they took him to jail. At the jail, they put him in the city "drunk tank", where he had an awful night because everyone in there was throwing up while Dick was sober.

The next morning, the same policeman came to the cell door and told him to get out. Dick commented and said, "Am I going to see the judge?"

The policeman said, "No, you are free to go" Later Dick found out that the policeman was a good friend of his dad. His dad told the policeman, "if Dick ever gets in trouble, put him in jail"

Bob final words for his life long friend ……

"One last Semper Fi for Dick"

Dick entered Hospice with Allina Homecare, in January 2024.

On February 4, 2024, the Allina staff honored him with a small ceremony of appreciation for his service in the military.

Allina Hospice told him that they are involved in a program called "We honor our veterans program".

During this ceremony, Dick was presented with a "Certificate of Appreciation" for his service in the United States Marine Corp

A few proud family members also attended!

He was asked to share a little bit about himself during this ceremony.

Dick shared the following, which was also recorded:

"I started to cut meat before I went in, so when I was in the military, I worked most of the time in the commissary.

My dad, uncle and two brothers were meat cutters. It was not special of me to enlist, it was what everyone did at that time.

I was between Korea and Vietnam. I was in three years when I finished my service. I had a son and daughter, so they would not to take me back"

Dick was blessed to have the Allina Hospice Program to support him during the last year of his life.

Each of his providers were successful in building a wonderful rapport and relationship with him, which enabled them to provide the necessary care and support that Dick needed.

They treated him with respect, dignity, and foremost kindness.

The family will be <u>forever grateful</u> and <u>thankful</u> to each one of them.

Dick had a special relationship with each of his care providers from Allina.

He really liked his nurse, Sandy! She made him smile and laugh every time she visited! He loved hearing about her trips and adventures!

Dick said she was feisty and didn't take his "crap", especially when he challenged her or refused her nursing services, which could be frequent! She was exactly what he needed!!

He always said that his home health aid, Debbie, was so nice and he really enjoyed visiting with her and said she worked too hard!

It took time, but she was very patient and kind to Dick until he finally quit refusing her home health services and began accepting them.

It was really hard for him to accept help from anyone… he was always so independent and did everything on his own!

Mary…. Dick's social worker, was always supportive and quick to respond to any concerns or needs that came up.

It was Mary who coordinated Dick's Certificate of Appreciation ceremony. He talked about that day and her continued thoughtfulness and kindness. on many occasions!

Art was one of Allina's Chaplains. Dick talked about Art and their visits often.

When asked if they talked about God, prayed or read the bible, he said "Mostly, we just visit. We talk about everything" Dick always looked forward to his visits with Art.

A few days before Dick passed away, the family asked him if he would like to have a Pastor of his faith come to talk with him since Art was of Jewish faith.

His response was simple, "**No**. I want Art"

Later he said, "We believe in the same God, that's all that matters".

Two days before Dick passed, Art visited with Dad.

Upon arrival, Dad said he asked Art to pray for him while he rested.

Dad told him he was going to meet his 9th great grandchild today,

but first he needed to rest.

So …. Art sat at his bedside and prayed for Dad while he slept,

until his granddaughter arrived with his 9th great-grandchild, Brooks.

Art was good for Dick. For one year, Art faithfully connected in person and by phone with him.

This connection brought Dick back to his faith. Dick said that he was reading his bible again daily

The family knows that there were other employees from Allina that came into Dick's home and cared for him when his "regular" Allina care providers were not available

They want to express their heartfelt thanks to you as well and for the kindness and care you provided for their dad during the past year.

Dick's Allina Hospice providers made him feel loved and cared for.

He felt like he had his own special team supporting him, which he did!!

You all made his last year so much better!

In closing, the following is from Dick's immediate family…..

This past year, we have loved our father unconditionally and worked diligently to respect his wishes with dignity and respect,

to promote his integrity, and to honor his self determination and independence.

It was difficult for dad to gradually lose his ability to do the things that he loved so much.

Simple, everyday things, that we all take for granted…..

🐟 Like walking down the steps to the lake,

🐟 getting in his pontoon boat for a quick ride around the lake,

🐟 driving his car, going to the store, taking his dog, Autumn outside for a walk.

He told us on many occasions, that he was ready to go to home to heaven…. to see his wife, his mom and dad, his brothers, his sister, his dog Tiffany and everyone else who went before him.

When his time came for the Lord to take him home, with what little strength he had left, he sat up, lifted his arms towards the heavens

and said, "God…. take me now" laid back, shut his eyes and passed away peacefully.

What a gift… no fear, no pain, he just surrendered.

Dad was nearly 85 years old when God took him home.

He lived a good life.

He will be missed, but we will hold him in our hearts and the memories will live on through the legacy he left behind.

Dad, thank you for giving us life, for loving us and for taking such good care of each one of us! We will always love you.

You are finally home…Rest in peace

We want to thank each one of you for being here with us today.

We thank you for your support, for sharing your sympathy through cards, text messages, and phone calls.

They have meant more to us than words can ever express.