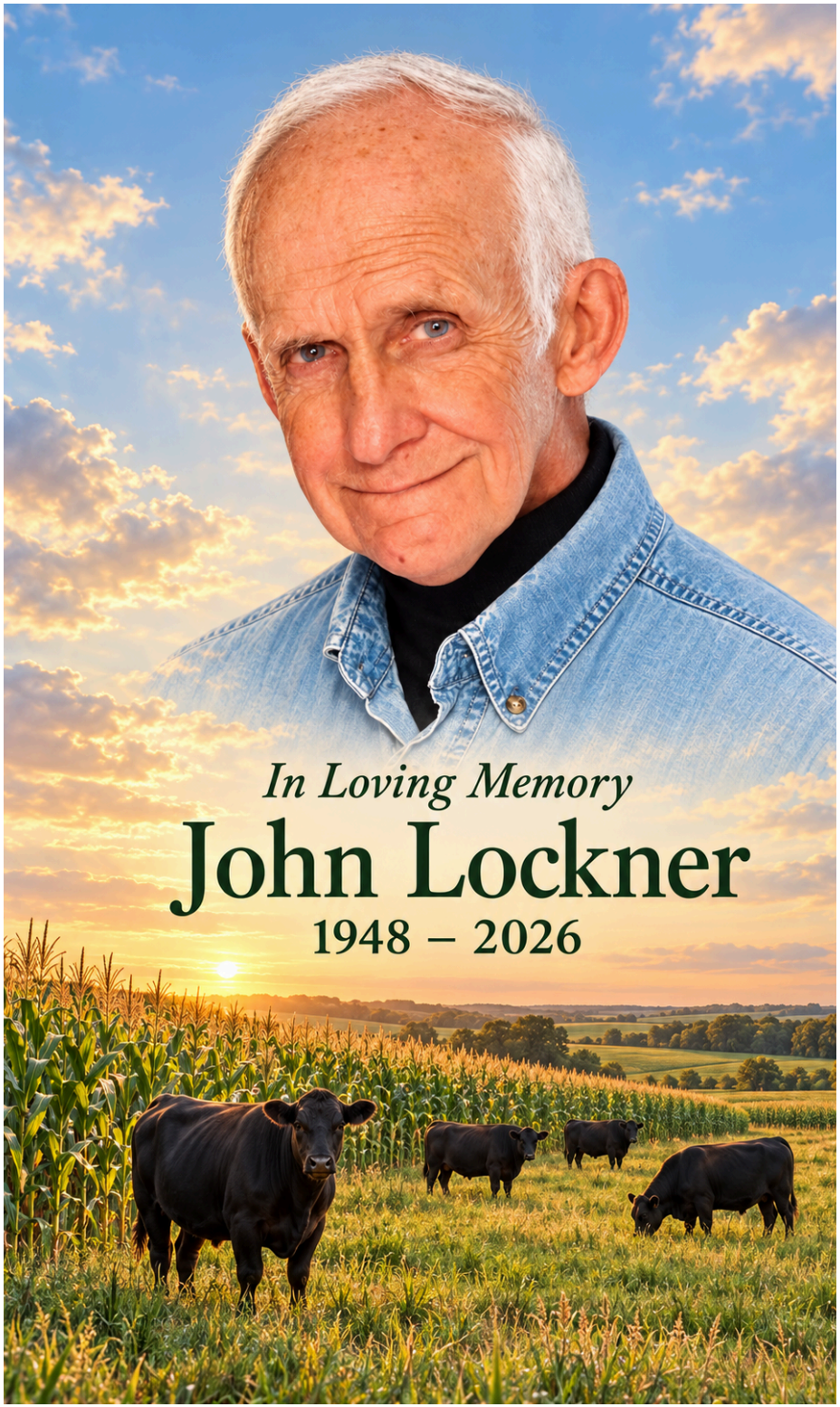


Farmer's Hands

Hands that are large and tough from years of rugged outdoor work. Hands that are versatile, simultaneously wielding and sickle swiping a fistful of June berries from a nearby bush. Hands that clasp themselves habitually in prayer giving thanks for food, for rain, for sun, for late frosts, early springs, good yield, for soil, for health, for a newborn calf. Hands that are strong, squeezing out a pail full of milk in just no time, pulling strands of barbed wire taut, carrying bales of hay and pails of water to hungry, thirsty farm animals. Hands that are gentle, marveling out at the softness of a furry kitten, rescuing a ducks nest from the path of the plow, patting the shoulder of a disappointed child. Hands that are inventive, twisting, pounding, pinching until a machine is fixed, shaping an idea into something useful. Hands that are tired from over a half century of tilling, planting, weeding, harvesting. Hands that we love - a farmer's hands, my father's, my grandfather's, my great-grandfather's.



John Lockner, 78, of Fort Rice, ND, passed away at his home on October 18th surrounded by his loved ones.

John was born on September 22nd, 1948, in Bismarck to Joseph and Eva (Wetsch) Lockner. John was raised and educated in Fort Rice and graduated from Mandan High School in 1966.

John proudly served in the United States Army from 1968 to 1971 as a helicopter gunner in Vietnam and later worked as a helicopter mechanic with the North Dakota National Guard. Before entering the service, he helped build the BSC Library and Civic Center. He went on to work for Burlington Northern Railroad as a conductor before retiring as a yardmaster in 2006. In 2008, he returned to the family farm, where he found his greatest joy. Farming was his true passion, and he loved spending his days on the tractor, square baling, packing silage, and working cattle. Just a few weeks ago, he was still out packing silage and helping with the cattle, showing that his love for farming never faded. Above all, John cherished his family, especially his wife, Sherry White, whom he married on July 4, 1973, in Lemmon, South Dakota.

In his free time, John and Joseph moved more buildings than they could count using their big black truck, making plenty of father-and-son memories along the way. John and Sherry also made many memories riding their 1973 Kawasaki motorcycle. John always joked that he could never sell it because it reminded him of the year they were married. He still owns this motorcycle, which remains in the garage today.

John enjoyed spending time in the garage with Joseph, restoring several vehicles, including a 1925 Model T, a 1928 Model A, and a 1939 Dodge pickup. He also had his 1955 Chevy pickup restored, which he drove for many years and Joseph and Jace drive to this day. His favorite car, however, was his 1957 gray Chevy, which was gone when he returned from Vietnam after his brother Doug wrecked it.

After retiring from the railroad in 2006, John and Sherry moved back to the family farm in 2008. Returning to the farm allowed John to spend more time doing what he loved most and carrying on the family farming tradition. Over the years, he also developed a soft spot for animals. He enjoyed raising chickens, making sure the barn cats got extra food, and spending time with his dog, Ember, and his many cats, including his favorite, Cashew.

John fought a long, hard battle with cancer beginning in 1998. Through it all, he remained a fighter, a hardworking farmer, and a devoted family man. He was proud to see Joseph and Jace carrying on the family farming tradition, just as he was proud of Jonathan as he built his own contracting company and Jericah as she continued her education and shared her love of gymnastics through coaching. He leaves behind a legacy of hard work, dedication, and family that will continue through each of them.

John is survived by his wife, Sherry; his son, Joseph, and daughter-in-law, Lori; and their three children, Jonathan, Jericah, and Jace; his mother-in-law, Marlene White; his brother-in-law, Scott White; his sister-in-law, Lissa White; and their children, Chelsea and Jenny.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Eva; his brother, Doug; and his father-in-law, Al White.

John will be remembered for his strength, determination, love of farming, and dedication to his family. He worked hard, fought hard, and left behind a legacy that will continue for generations. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

Memorial Service	Friday, October 23, 2026; 11:00 AM Weigel Funeral Home Mandan, North Dakota
Officiant	Pastor Buford "Boots" Marsh
Urn Bearers	Grandkids ~ Jonathan, Jericah, & Jace Lockner

Order of service

Prelude Music	*"Go Rest High on that Mountain"* Vince Gill
Welcome by Pastor	
Scripture Reading	Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
Poem Reading	*"Close the Gate"* read by Jericah Lockner
Scripture Readings	Ecclesiastes 7:1-4 James 4:14
Special Music	*"When I'm Gone"* Joey & Rory
Poem Reading	"A Farmer's Prayer" read by Jericah Lockner
Scripture Reading	John 11:25-26
Closing Song	*"How Great Thou Art"*

Committal Service 12 noon, North Dakota Veterans Cemetery
Mandan, North Dakota

The family invites you for lunch & fellowship at Signature Events, 401 W. Main Street, Mandan, immediately following the memorial service.

WEIGEL Buehler-Larson Funeral and Cremation Service

Scan the QR Code to watch John's Celebration of Life Tribute Video