



James L. Stephenson

August 14, 1952 - July 1, 2014

James Leslie Stephenson was born to Leslie Howard Stephenson and Elsie Elvira Osborn Stephenson on August 14, 1952, at York, Nebraska, and passed away July 1, 2014, in Lincoln, Nebraska, at the age of 61 years, 10 months and 17 days. He was one of three children in the family. Jim grew up on the family farm just outside of Fairmont, and attended Fairmont Public School from which he graduated in May, 1970. In high school he enjoyed playing basketball. After graduating, he attended Central Community College in Hastings, Nebraska, earning his degree in Diesel Technology. He put that technical knowledge to use as he continued to farm with his father, brother Lowell, and later nephew Loren, planting and harvesting corn, soybeans, as well as raising hogs. Jim grew up in the United Methodist Church in Fairmont where he was baptized and confirmed. He later joined the United Methodist Church in McCool Junction, of which he was a member at the time of his death. Jim was married to Janet Kay Fankhauser of Tecumseh, Nebraska, on August 4, 1979, and to them two children were born – Caroline Renee and Cassandra Marie. Jim was so proud of his daughters and their accomplishments, and supported them through their participation in sports and activities throughout their school years, coming to their ball games and events whenever he was able to. He faithfully hauled livestock to the county and state fair for both daughters during their 4-H and FFA years. Later, he enjoyed hearing about their college and professional school experiences, and was so proud to be an “Alpha Xi Delta Dad” to both of them. He was also

pleased to be Grampy to Katie and “little James”, and had so much fun playing with them and teasing them as only a Grampy could. It was no secret that Jim had a love and passion for farming. It was in his blood; he grew up on the farm and worked very hard alongside his family everyday to channel that passion into the farming operation they created. He was tied to the land and his profession, even when he was not able to participate in the ways he had been accustomed to. He dedicated his life’s work to being attuned to the earth and what it could bring forth, and instilled a strength and work ethic into his family and children that we are proud to continue on. He was proud that in 2011, the farm received the Nebraska Pioneer Farm Award from the Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation for 100 Years of continuous family ownership. Jim also had a love for animals, particularly dogs. He could be seen driving around the country, checking on his pivots and fields with his faithful lab/blue heeler mix, Jenny, in the back or cab of his pickup truck. Sometimes his three other dogs, Maddie, Freckles and Atlee, would get to ride along too. He loved antique farm tools, machinery, and enjoyed seeing them at the Nebraska State Fair which he never missed attending. He was also an International Harvester memorabilia collector. With that, he also loved all kinds of history. Jim had a great knowledge of local history, genealogy, and early settlement of the Fairmont area. He loved to share this with his family and friends, and we loved to hear his extensive knowledge from his incredible memory. Jim had such a kind soul; he was friendly to everyone he met and always had time to visit with his friends and acquaintances no matter where or when their paths would cross. He was even-tempered, good natured, and had a fun and witty sense of humor. We will so greatly miss all that he brought to this world and our lives. His greatest loves were to be working on his farm and to be around all of his family. His life and the way that he lived it was a true reflection of God’s love for us and His creation. Jim was preceded in death by his parents, Leslie Howard Stephenson and Elsie Elvira Osborn Stephenson, both of Fairmont, Nebraska. He is survived by his wife, Janet; his two daughters, Caroline and husband Christopher Marciano of Houston, Texas and Dr. Cassandra and

husband Bryan Heath of Salina, Kansas; his two grandchildren, Kathryn Renee Marciano and James Arthur Marciano of Houston, Texas; a sister, Barbara Jean Leefers and husband, Milton, of Unadilla, Nebraska; a brother, Lowell Stephenson, of Fairmont; parents-in-law Densel and Irene Fankhauser of Tecumseh, Nebraska; sisters-in-law Charlotte Grof of Lincoln, Nebraska and Carolyn Coldwell and husband, David, of Bowling Green, Kentucky; nephews Loren Stephenson of Fairmont, Chad Leefers of Houston, Texas and Doyle Leefers of Smithville, Missouri; niece Teresa (Stephenson) Rodriguez of Pecos, New Mexico; and many other relatives and friends. Funeral services will be conducted from McCool Junction United Methodist Church, McCool Junction, Nebraska, on Monday, July 7, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. with Pastor Ralph Gaines officiating. Annie Hall will serve as organist, and Delores Bailey will accompany Chelsey Tyburski who will sing "How Great Thou Art" and "He Leadeth Me". Pallbearers will be nephews Loren Stephenson, Chad Leefers, and Doyle Leefers; sons-in-law Christopher Marciano and Bryan Heath; and brother-in-law David Coldwell. Interment will be in the Fairmont Public Cemetery with Farmer & Son Funeral Home in charge of arrangements. Memorials are directed to York Adopt-A-Pet and the Fairmont Cemetery Association.

Tribute Wall

KG

“ *James L. Stephenson*

Kathy A. Glodowski - July 09, 2014 at 07:38 PM

CC

“ *Our deepest sympathy in your time of loss. May the Lord bring you peace and comfort in this difficult time.*

Charles Clark and Kiana Huff

Charles Clark - July 08, 2014 at 11:17 AM

SR

“ *Janet & family, so sorry to hear about your loss. Cherish all the great memories!!! With Sympathy*

Sarah Reinsch - July 06, 2014 at 11:40 PM

GK

“ *So sorry to hear of Jim's passing. We express our condolences to you, Janet, and family.*

Glenda and Bob Kai - July 06, 2014 at 04:18 PM

TF

“ *We are so sorry to hear of Mr. Stephenson's passing. Whenever we came in contact with him, his kind and thoughtful nature was evident without his ever saying a word. He raised two wonderful girls with whom he is so proud. God has a special place in Heaven for farmers like him. God bless. Love, The Swanbergs*

The Swanberg Family - July 05, 2014 at 11:33 PM

SE

“ *My deepest sympathy to the family of this wonderful man who will be greatly missed. My prayer is that you can find some comfort in the fond memories you have of Jim.*

Susan Emmert - July 05, 2014 at 09:38 PM

CK

“ *Wish to send my condolences to all of the Stephenson family. I was so surprised when I read about Jim. Enjoyed working with him so much. Always had a smile or a joke to tell. Prayers for all of you.*

Chris Korn - July 05, 2014 at 07:19 PM

LC

“ *Janet, Our family so wants to send our condolences and to let you know we are keeping you in our hearts and prayers at this time of loss. We thought alot of Jim and your family as you welcomed us so graciously when we moved to the community of Fairmont and became a part of the 4-H family. Jim always greeted us with a big smile and fun joke when ever we ran into one another or attended the same school events. He will be truly missed. We will keep you in our prayers and send hugs of comfort. Lisa, Kyle, Emily and Abigail Carroll*

Lisa Carroll - July 05, 2014 at 01:13 PM

KM

“ *God bless Jim and all the family*

Kathy & Dominick Marciano - July 04, 2014 at 11:19 AM

GS

“ Jim was a farmer all of his life, like his father and our grandfather. That was God's Plan for him. He was a hardworking, honest farmer, just as Paul Harvey described in his 1978 commentary "So God Made a Farmer." God bless him. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Garold and Dorothy Stephenson - July 04, 2014 at 12:04 AM

JM

“ Prayers for the Stephenson family. I'm going to miss you Jim and really wish I could've gotten to know you better.

John J Marciano - July 03, 2014 at 11:32 PM

SG

“ One of the most honorable and decent men we will ever know... we are grateful to have known you, Jim Stephenson! God Bless You... until we meet again.

Scott and Stacy Grof - July 03, 2014 at 02:45 PM

VF

“ Sorry for your loss. Sympathy to you and your family. Vickie

Vickie Friesen - July 03, 2014 at 01:18 PM