

OBITUARY FOR DON PILGRIM

Dr. Donald H. Pilgrim, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at Luther College in Decorah, passed away peacefully at his home with his six daughters at his side Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016, at the age of 86. Funeral services were at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 26, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Decorah, with Pastor Amy Larson officiating. Organist was Brooke Joyce. Congregational hymns were "Borning Cry" and "The King of Love My Shepherd Is." Honorary pall bearers were the oldest grandchild from each family: Jeremy Kittelson, Hannah Huinker, Jessica Jewell, Gannon Hjerleid, Ames Helzer, Roy Pilgrim. Casket bearers were Randy Kittelson, Mike Huinker, Gavin Hjerleid, Bobby Jewell, Josh Brown, Jeff Pilgrim. Burial is in Lutheran Cemetery in Decorah later this spring. Visitation was from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25, at Fjelstul Funeral Home in Decorah and Friday beginning at 10 a.m., one hour before the service, at the church. Fjelstul Funeral Home in Decorah served the family. Online condolences may be made at fjelstul.com.

Donald Harry Pilgrim was born May 31, 1929, in Sioux City, to Harold and Charlotte (Olsen) Pilgrim. Don graduated from South Sioux High School and continued on to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree from Morningside College. He earned his Master of Science degree from the University of Iowa and his Doctorate of Philosophy in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin. Don was married to Virginia Lee (Fuhrman) Pilgrim June 17, 1956; they were married 52 years. They were blessed with six daughters: Suzanne, Kim, twins Julie and Paula, Mary and Martha. Don worked as a mathematics teacher at Paulina High School and Keokuk Community College in Iowa. From 1956 to 1991, he was a professor of mathematics at Luther College in Decorah. Virginia and Don then retired and lived in Bella Vista, Ark. for 17 years. Virginia passed away March 25, 2008. Don stayed in Bella Vista for one more year before moving back to Decorah for the remainder of his life. He enjoyed spending time with his family and friends, golfing, reading, music, and doing crossword puzzles. He was also actively involved in his church memberships.

Don is survived by his six daughters: Suzanne Lee Kittelson and husband Randy of Golden, Colo.; Kim Lee Huinker and husband, Mike of Decorah; twins, Julie Marie Hjerleid and husband Gavin of Mallard and Paula Ann Jewell and husband Bobby of Decorah; Mary Pilgrim Helzer of Decorah; and Martha Lynn Pilgrim and husband Joshua of Fayetteville, Ark.; grandchildren: Jeremy Kittelson, Joshua Kittelson and wife Allison; Hannah (Huinker) Schroeber and husband John, Lydia Huinker and fiance Brian Black, Dane Huinker and girlfriend Taylor Nelson; Gannon Hjerleid and girlfriend Alex Mullen, Taylor (Hjerleid) Buch and husband Brandon, Logan Hjerleid, Payton Hjerleid; Jessica (Jewell) Tangen and husband Mike, Samantha (Jewell) Wedemeier and husband Tyler, Robby Jewell and girlfriend Jordyn Dudek, Josey Jewell and girlfriend Nicole Lansing; Ames, Myla, and Murray Helzer; Roy Pilgrim and girlfriend Aviva Steigmeyer, Reyes, Solomon, twins Leaf and Roald Pilgrim-Brown; great-grandchildren: Bodin, Jack, Gunner, Ryder and Abel Kittelson; Jack Schroeber; Gracelynn, Jaden, and Virginia Tangen; nephew Jeffery Pilgrim and niece Kellie Worden.

Don was preceded in death by his wife Virginia; parents Harold and Charlotte Pilgrim; brother Neil Pilgrim; and grandson Garrett Hjerleid.
In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be given to WMC Hospice, 901 Montgomery Street, Decorah, IA 52101.