# Gerald R. “Jerry” Bertelson

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Jerry Bertelson of rural Missouri Valley passed away peacefully on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 at the Longview Memory Lane Care Center from complications of Alzheimer’s Disease. .

Gerald “Jerry” Richard Bertelson was born at home in Willow Park, Missouri Valley, Iowa on August 20, 1930 to Danish and Norwegian parents James Christian and Lily Dagney Bertelson. The fifth of nine children he was surrounded by family and it remained a cornerstone of his life. From an early age he worked with younger brother Jack at the family business, The Valley Mill. In school he lettered in every sport including track, basketball and a football team that went to state. He also played French horn in the band and was in the first All-State vocal chorus. He was graduated from Missouri Valley High School in 1948.

In 1950 he joined the US Navy and served as a Photographers’ Mate Second Class in San Diego, Korea and Hawaii. He was aboard the USS Essex, an aircraft carrier, in the VF-54 Fighter Squadron and attended their annual reunions until they disbanded. He left the Navy in 1954 with enough stories for a lifetime.

In 1953 with brothers Gene and Jack he bought The Valley Mill and upon his return from the Navy started selling fertilizer and chemicals. For many years they also built grain storage bins in the off season and into his 80’s Jerry could still identify those bins on drives around the county.

In the 1950’s Jerry and Jack formed the Valley Fertilizer Company. This was when anhydrous ammonia came into general use and greatly boosted crop yields. This, combined with improved farm chemicals, led to the green revolution and a thriving business. Valley Fertilizer was a business but also a social

gathering place for farmers, and many winter days concluded with card games around large round wooden table. Jerry and Jack also farmed together and continued this operation after selling the fertilizer business in 1992. The brothers learned good business sense from their father Jim, who had a variety of successful concerns, and applied this principal in their business life.

In 1955 Jerry married Janice Marlene Powell and they had two sons Christian Dale in 1958 and Kyle Mitchell in 1962. They lived in a big, brown, four-square house on the old Frazier farm 3 miles east of town.
In 1974 Jerry built a prefabricated Wick home south of town and lived there for the next 44 years. It was his pride and joy and he loved taking care of his house, his yard and his garden. In 1984 he married the love of his life, Sharon Irene Dague. She remained his “Comrade Cutie” for the rest of his life. They were married over 33 years.

Jerry served on the Missouri Valley Volunteer Fire Department for over 10 years, a lifetime member of the VFW and a 55-year member of the American Legion Post 337. He was a lifelong member of the Missouri Valley United Methodist Church. He was in the Fraternal Order of Eagles for 38 years and thanks to Sharon was completely stunned by a surprise birthday party there when he turned 70.

The travel bug bit Jerry at an early age and he was never cured. The Bertelsons always went to Bemidji, Minnesota in the summer and Jerry went north for 81 of his 87 years. It is a magical place and a wonderful time to enjoy family and the great outdoors. With Sharon he bought a 5$^{th}$ wheel camper and pulled it all over the western US and Canada. Up and down snowy mountain passes and across scorching deserts they

trekked and accumulated memories and stories of punctured tires, flooded campers and overflowing awnings. They took 5 cruises including one through the Panama Canal and as snowbirds went to Phoenix every winter for 32 years. Many fine hours were spent taking pictures of desert sunsets and sipping Jerry's special "Iced tea".

Jerry and Sharon liked to entertain and hosted many class reunion parties at their Iowa home and invited friends to visit them in Arizona. They made friends everywhere they went from lumbermen in Canada to neighbors in Florida and anyone they sat next to in an Eagles club.

From his father and Uncle Charlie, Jerry learned a love of fishing and duck hunting. He played golf, water skied, snow skied and enjoyed swimming and boating. He had a great appetite for Louis L'Amour novels and just about any western in print or on TV. He liked to watch movies and liked anything with John Wayne. He always liked to read and rarely sat down without reaching for a magazine or USA Today.

Because of his good nature Jerry was darned good company. From liar's dice to battleship or just a rubber band fight, he was ready to play. He loved cards and played pitch, casino and pass the ace. He liked doing card tricks. Jerry loved music and could sing and harmonize naturally. He enjoyed playing the ukulele, piano and harmonica. He liked to play tricks on his co-workers and got as good as he gave. He loved a good laugh and relished the opportunity to tell a good joke. His punch line timing was perfect. He was also known to repeat some favorite jokes on occasion. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Sharon; sons, Chris (Laura) Bertelson of Winterset and Kyle of Missouri Valley; step-son, Randy (Cindy) Dague and step-daughter, Lynda (Earl) Clark of Council Bluffs; grandchildren, Lizzy, Carri, Christan and Kati Bertelson, Kylie Bertelson Lorenzen, John Beam, Bobby,

Christopher and Michael Dague, Troy and Jennifer Ross; four great grandchildren; siblings, Lucille (Bob) Anderson of Minneapolis, brother-in-law Clyde Kleager of Scotts Bluff, Jack (Eloise) Bertelson of Missouri Valley, Carole Liljedahl of Missouri Valley, Jo Ann (Glen) Sherwood of Hermosa, South Dakota, and Judy (Neil) Stessman of Fort Lupton, Colorado, and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

Jerry was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Gene Bertelson; sister-in-law, Trish Bertelson; sister, Thordis Kleager; brother-in-law Lenus Liljedahl; and infant sister, Beverly June.

Visitation Sunday February 25th from 2-4PM at the Hennessey Funeral Home, 310 East Huron Street, Missouri Valley. Funeral Service 11:0o a.m. Monday, February 26, 2018 at the United Methodist Church 308 E. Superior, Missouri Valley and a Luncheon at the Eagles Club, 118 S 5th, Missouri Valley after the committal service at the cemetery.

**In Loving Memory Of**

**Gerald Richard "Jerry" Bertelson**

**Born**

August 20, 1930 Willow Park, Missouri Valley, Iowa

**Entered Into Rest**

February 21, 2018
Missouri Valley, Iowa

**Funeral Service**

11:00 a.m. Monday, February 26, 2018

United Methodist Church

Missouri Valley, Iowa

**Officiating**

Pastor Gideon Gallo

**Organist**

Kris Gash

**Vocalists** Mike Liljedahl and Brit Liljedahl

**Congregational Selections**

“Amazing Grace” #378 “Blest Be the Tie That Binds” #557

**Vocal Selection**

“Wind Beneath My Wings”

**Honorary Bearers**

Kim Bertelson

Denny Osborn

Neil Stessman
Tom Bertelson

Jennifer Ross
Carri Bertelson

Christan Bertelson
Kati Bertelson

**Casket Bearers**

Nick Bertelson
Bobby Dague

Lizzy Bertelson
Michael Dague

Noah Bertelson
Christopher Dague

**Final Resting Place**

Oak Grove Cemetery

Missouri Valley, Iowa

Military Honors will be conducted by Julius F. Muller American Legion Post #337.