

Wallace "Wally" Jensen

July 31, 1934 – August 24, 2016

Wallace "Wally" Jensen, 82, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, August 24, 2016, at Sanford USD Medical Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Wally was born on July 31, 1934, in White, South Dakota, to Charles and Gladys Jensen. He grew up in Brookings and attended the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD), graduating in 1954.



A talented athlete, Wally excelled in football, basketball, and track during his school years. In 1949, he joined SDSD's first six-man football team, established under coach Roy K. Holcomb. The team finished its inaugural season undefeated, with four wins and no losses. A standout left-handed quarterback, Wally helped lead SDSD through five consecutive winning seasons, highlighted by a championship in 1953.

His enthusiasm for athletics continued after graduation. While living in Brookings, Wally regularly traveled to Sioux Falls to play basketball and softball with the local Deaf community. He played for many years with the former Sioux Falls Club for the Deaf and the Sioux Falls Association of the Deaf. He became known as one of the Midwest Athletic Association of the Deaf's finest fast-pitch softball pitchers and earned numerous all-star honors at its tournaments. In recognition of his athletic achievements, he was inducted into the MAAD Hall of Fame in 1970.

After graduating, Wally returned to Brookings, where he worked at a dairy for several years. He later moved to Sioux Falls and worked for the John Morrell Company until his retirement. After retiring, he continued working part-time at Hy-Vee in Sioux Falls.



On October 15, 1955, Wally married Patricia Faulkner in a private ceremony at the former Trinity Lutheran Church for the Deaf on Mable Avenue in Sioux Falls. To celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary, they took a cruise to Hawaii with close friends. They shared more than 60 years of marriage.

Wally loved the outdoors, especially fishing and hunting. In 1985, he served as the first president of the South Dakota Deaf Anglers. He was also a devoted fan of the Minnesota Vikings, Minnesota Twins, and South Dakota State University Jackrabbits, and he enjoyed collecting model airplanes.



A longtime member and supporter of the South Dakota Association of the Deaf and the Deaf Seniors of South Dakota, Wally remained involved in the Deaf community throughout his life. He was inducted into the SDAD Hall of Fame in 2001.

At the time of his passing, Wally was survived by his wife, Patricia, of Marion, South Dakota; his brother, Leroy Jensen, and Leroy's wife, Lola, of Brookings; his nephew, Steve Jensen, and Steve's wife, Kami, of Brookings; and his very special friends, Jim and Janice Mitchell, of Sioux Falls.

A celebration of Wally's life was held on Saturday, August 27, 2016, at Trinity Lutheran Church for the Deaf in Sioux Falls. Kober Funeral Home of Vermillion assisted with the arrangements.