

Clayton “Clay” Kennedy, of Urbandale, Iowa, lost his battle with cancer on August 22, 2022, in Waukee, Iowa. Clayton was born in La Grand, Iowa, to Joseph and Anne (Bales) Kennedy. Joseph was superintendent of schools for several small school districts in central Iowa, so the family moved around a bit. In those days, a house on the school grounds usually came with the superintendent position; as a result, Clayton got a variety of experiences, such as raising animals for 4-H and having the school gymnasium at his disposal. Clayton transferred from Alleman to Bondurant in the 8th grade and quickly became a solid basketball and baseball player for the Bondurant High School class of '52 (class size of 20!). He sang in the school choir as well as being a good athlete especially in basketball obtaining the game high score more than once. Clay remained an avid sports fan especially Iowa high school and college sports. After graduation and a freshman year at the University of Iowa, Clayton enlisted with the U.S. Air Force as a refueler for large cargo planes and fighter jet planes, first in northern Maine and later in England. Clayton enjoyed and was proud of his military service and wished to reenlist, but due to an injury on the job, he was honorably discharged and came back stateside to finish schooling at Drake and Grandview Universities. Like his father, Clayton chose a teaching career, first in Mingo and then Urbandale, where he settled into relatively new school district at the time (Southeast Polk) as the 8th grade history teacher. He stayed there for over 20 years, assisting as a girls' track coach and helping out with home football games. He was popular with the students and very much enjoyed teaching American history with an emphasis on the Civil War and government civics. During his teaching days and long after his retirement, while around town running errands or eating out, he often ran into students who had “Mr. Kennedy” as their 8th-grade history teacher. The students, now adults, always had vivid memories of the great stories he would tell to help make some of the history lessons more personable and interesting for his students. Clayton met his future wife, Margaret, in 1963 and quickly fell in love, marrying the next year and having a son, David, in 1965. Margaret came from a large family in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. Given that Clayton was a teacher, as were several members of Margaret's family, summers were often enjoyed back east in Geneseo, New York, with Margaret's family. Traveling to Geneseo for the summer and touring the Finger Lakes region was an annual ritual for 20 years and made the summer special for the family. After David graduated from Iowa State University and moved to Oregon for employment opportunities, Clayton and Margaret made several trips to Portland to visit their son and daughter-in-law and, later, their grandson Evan. Clayton very much enjoyed touring the Pacific Northwest, including its beaches, mountains, and towns, and spending time in Portland. Back home, Clayton was very involved in local American Legion post assisting with many activities, including the Boy's State of Iowa annual event for students to learn and gain civics leadership experience in the operation of the democratic form of government. Clayton touched many lives over the years and was a big proponent of telling fantastic stories of coincidence, experiences, and just what a small world it can be. He was always ready to meet someone new and become fast friends—a one of a kind—he will be missed! Clayton was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Anne Kennedy of Bondurant; an older brother, Keith, who died as an infant; his younger brother, Bruce, of Des Moines; Margaret DeCamp Kennedy, his wife of 46 years, of Geneseo, New York; and his grandson, Evan, of Portland, Oregon, who was a special needs child. He is survived by his only son, David (Kristina) of Portland, Oregon. A celebration of life memorial will be held at Westkirk Presbyterian Church at 2700 Colby Woods Parkway in Urbandale on October 27 at 11:00 a.m. with a reception to follow. If you would like to honor Clayton, in lieu of flowers or gifts, the family requests that you can make a donation to Grandview University, at <https://www.grandview.edu/donate>.