



Neil Giffey

April 8, 1926 - December 16, 2015

Dodgeville -- Neil Giffey, age 89, died Wednesday, December 16, 2015, at Upland Hills Health in Dodgeville, Wis., surrounded by his loving family. Neil was born April 8, 1926, in Sheboygan, Wis., to Neil Victor and Monica Margaret (Sullivan) Giffey. The eldest of four children, he was baptized at St. Patrick's Church in Ripon and grew up on a succession of family farms in Fond du Lac County. Neil attended the one-room Bell School and then Rosendale High School before graduating from Fond du Lac High School in 1946. During his school years, he excelled at oratory, took part in 4-H (he later was a 4-H leader), and worked hard on the family farm.

Neil enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1946 and served in the Army of Occupation in Japan, helping to repair the destruction wrought by World War II. After his honorable discharge from the Army as a technician fourth grade, Neil continued to live on the family farm and attended the University of Wisconsin Extension Center in Fond du Lac for one year. He worked a variety of agricultural jobs before becoming involved in the artificial insemination business and forming Progressive Breeders Service. In 1965, Neil went to work for American Breeders Service as a district sales manager and soon settled in Dodgeville. Around that time, his sister, Prudence, introduced Neil to her roommate, Janet Wien. The couple married on July 29, 1967, at St. Mary's Church in Janesville.

While continuing to work for ABS and later East Central Select Sires, Neil became interested in raising Simmental beef cattle. He was instrumental in founding the Wisconsin Simmental Association in 1972 and served as the group's first president. For a time he also owned a farm in the Town of Ridgeway, where he kept his Simmental.

After retiring from Select Sires in 1988, Neil began a second career as unofficial city historian and community volunteer extraordinaire, working tirelessly to improve his adopted hometown and preserve and promote its history. Neil became heavily involved in the Iowa County Historical Society, working as newsletter editor for 16 years and serving terms as president and board member. He took it upon himself to ensure the preservation of Iowa County's oldest building, the 1827-era Henry Dodge Party Log Cabin, raising thousands of dollars and overseeing the building's relocation and restoration. Dressed in period garb, he even portrayed Dodge at several public functions. Neil was a longtime member of the Dodgeville Historic Preservation Commission, the Dodgeville Cultural Arts Committee, the Madison History Roundtable, and the Dodgeville Kiwanis Club. He also managed volunteers at the Dodgeville tourist information center, and recorded lengthy oral history interviews with local "old timers."

Neil was a devoted genealogist and a voracious reader, especially of politics, current events, and history, and he was always willing to engage in a vigorous conversation or to speak publicly on his favorite topics. As recently as a few weeks before his death, he impressed the staff and residents at Bloomfield Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center with an impromptu Veterans Day speech. He was the proud grandson of a Civil War veteran and a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Neil is survived by his wife of 48 years, Janet Mae (Wien); two children, Anne (Rob Budach) Giffey of Galesburg, Ill., and Tom (Tiffany) Giffey of Eau Claire;

two grandchildren, Graham and Gloria Giffey of Eau Claire; two brothers, David (Nancy) of Arena and Pierce of Appleton; a brother-in-law, Tom (Mardel) Wien of Janesville; niece and nephew, Michelle and Tim Giffey of Appleton; step-nephews David Goodfriend (Bethesda, Md.) and Michael Goodfriend (Ashland, Ore.); and countless relatives whose vital statistics he carefully recorded for posterity in his genealogical software. He was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Prudence; and a sister-in-law, Rose Marie Giffey.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2015, at ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH in Dodgeville. Monsignor Daniel Ganshert will officiate. Burial will be held in St. Joseph's Cemetery. Friends may call from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Friday at the GORGEN-McGINLEY & AYERS FUNERAL HOME in Dodgeville, and from 10 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. on Saturday at the church.

The family wishes to thank the staffs at both Bloomfield Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center and Upland Hills Health for their kindness and support.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to St. Joseph's Catholic School, Community Connections Free Clinic, or the Iowa County Historical Society (for the preservation of the Dodge cabin).

Tribute Wall



“ *Neil Giffey*

November 15, 2022 at 06:49 AM



“ *Jan & family-we are so sorry for your loss. Thoughts and prayers are with you and family.*

Diane & John Hermanson - April 28, 2018 at 01:44 AM



“ *Dear Jan, Anne, Tom and family:Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Bud was a good man and we will miss him.*

Michael and Nancy Goodfriend - April 28, 2018 at 01:44 AM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. He was a good man and always willing to help when it was needed.*

Dave & Bonnie Downs - April 28, 2018 at 01:44 AM



“ *To the Giffey family. So sorry to hear of the passing of Neil. What a wonderful man.*

Keith Clough - April 28, 2018 at 01:44 AM

MB

“ Neil was a history detective. I'll never forget Neil, Phil Mayer and I climbing the tower of our "oldest active courthouse in the state" to look for some historical markings. That was years ago. I loved his adventurous spirit, political wit and ready smile. Neil always sat at "our table" during Kiwanis meetings. We will miss him dearly.

Mary Kay Baum - April 28, 2018 at 01:44 AM

MB

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Mary Kay Baum - April 28, 2018 at 01:44 AM

CW

“ My thoughts are with you and I hope that the memory of past Christmases brings you some comfort this year.

Cathy Walters - April 28, 2018 at 01:44 AM

ES

“ Dear Mrs. Giffey,

*It is with great sadness that I learned of the death of your husband.
My prayers go with you and your family. May God give you His
peace and comfort.*

*Sincerely,
Ellen Russell Stroud*

Ellen Russell Stroud - January 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM