



Ernest Peter Petersen

JAN 28, 2018



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Ernest Petersen “Ernie” was born and raised in Audubon County, Iowa. His father Peter C. Petersen immigrated to the US from Denmark. His mother Anna Lauritsen Petersen raised their ten children.

Ernie’s brothers Louis, Leonard, and Frank preceded him in death, as did his sisters Elizabeth Anderson, Delores Anderson, Adelia Diest, and Florence Anderson. He is survived by his sisters Vi Kilworth and Shirley Sherman and his wife Jane and 47 nieces and nephews.

In Iowa, Ernie farmed one of his grandfather’s farms. He served in the Korean War in the 5th Army 101st Division and saw service on the front lines. Returning to the States he resumed farming, and then in 1963 joined the Peace Corps and was sent to India. There he was able to help farmers increase their yields 400% by the use of fertilizers, irrigation, plant population and insecticide. He served two years as a volunteer and the next six years on Staff.

He met his wife Jane Blair when she was sent to India in 1966 on a five-week trip for UC Berkeley Peace Corps. He received an ambassadorial appointment to the Foreign Service State Department Agency for International Development. He served five years in Vietnam ’70 ‘o ’75 in CORDS which worked towards economic development and subsequently in Washington DC as Operations Officer for the resettlement of 350,000 Vietnamese refugees into the U.S. He was the first person sent to the Sinai desert to establish the Sinai Field Mission for the U.S. Government/State Department which monitored the return of the Sinai to Egypt, followed by postings as a Food for Peace Officer for USAID in Egypt and Somalia.

Ernie was strong and determined, adventurous and courageous. He knew how to observe a situation and determine what needed to be done. Those who loved him will miss him but remember his service to others, kindness and generosity.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Ernest by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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