

I. Ronald Lawfer



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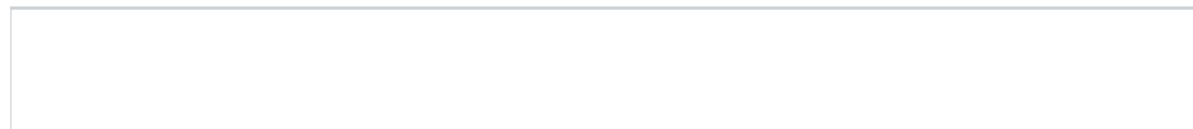
Irvin Ronald Lawfer passed away Sunday morning December 18, 2016 at home surrounded by his family. He was born a twin to Ivan Donald Lawfer on May 15, 1934 at home in Kent, IL to Myron D. and Martha C. (Beyer) Lawfer. He married Patricia A. Renken on October 2, 1955 in Mason City, IL. They celebrated 61 years together. Ron attended grade school at rural Wards Grove School and graduated from Stockton High School in 1951. He graduated with a degree in agriculture and journalism in 1955 from the University of Illinois at Urbana and was a member of Farm House fraternity where he served as President his senior year. He worked as a reporter for the Daily Illini and the Champaign News-Gazette during his college years. He was commissioned an officer in the U.S. Army upon his college graduation and entered active duty at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1955. After schooling at Ft. Benning, he was assigned to the 7th Infantry Division in Korea. During his eighteen-month tour in Korea as an Infantry

Officer, he was an executive officer of a regimental medical company and also served in Eighth Army Engineer headquarters dealing with soil erosion problems on military installation throughout all of South Korea. He was awarded the Army Commendation Ribbon for these soil conservation efforts and his tour of duty ended in October 1957 with the rank of 1st Lieutenant. Upon his return to Illinois, he purchased a dairy farm adjoining the farm where he was born. He served as director and vice president of Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau. He was a member of the Midwest Dairyman Cooperative. He was named outstanding dairyman of Jo Daviess County. Ron and his brother hosted the Illinois Land Improvement Contractor's Association Show in 1973. The conservation practices implemented at this show are all still in use today. From 1974 to 1976, he served on the Illinois Agricultural and Stabilization Committee, appointed by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, traveling the state implementing the USDA Farm Programs. Ron believed that a farmer could be a conservationist and still produce food from the land. Because of his extensive soil and water conservation practices on his rolling Jo Daviess County dairy farm, he was named Prairie Farmer "Master Farmer" in 1985. He was proud to see his son and daughter-in-law receive the "Master Farmer" award in 2016. He served as chairman of the Jo Daviess County Agricultural Extension Council and as Illinois delegate chairman of the Jo Daviess County Agricultural Farmland Trust. He was Wards Grove township supervisor from 1974 to 1982 and a member of the Jo Daviess County Board from 1982 to 1992, serving as chairman of the agriculture committee. He also served on the Illinois Rural Bond Bank and as a director of the Kent Bank. In 1992, Ron was elected State Representative in the Illinois General Assembly representing five Northwest Illinois counties and was named top ranking freshman legislator. He was reelected for five terms before retiring in 2002 with a perfect attendance record. He continued to operate a hay and grain farm after retirement from the General Assembly as his son took over the dairy. He was baptized at the St. John's Lutheran Church at Massbach, confirmed at St.

Paul's Lutheran Church at Kent, and was a member of Christ Lutheran Church in Stockton where he served as member and chairman of the church council. Ron is survived by wife, Patricia; 5 children, Kathy Lawfer of Cooktown, Australia, Karen Lawfer of Juneau, Alaska, Kay Johnson of Watseka, Ronald L. (Julie Stiefel) Lawfer of Kent, Kristine (David) Griffith of East Peoria; 9 grandchildren, Brian (Wendy) Felix of Salem, Oregon, Sarah Felix of Miami, Florida, Anne Johnson of Watseka, Justin (Tonya) Lawfer of Stoughton, Wisconsin, Ben (Samantha) Lawfer of Kent, John Lawfer of Kent, Dr. Serena (Kevin) Larsen of Morrison, Kyle Griffith of Seattle, Washington, and Michelle Griffith of East Peoria; and 4 great-granddaughters, Norah Felix, Skyla Lawfer, Sydney Lawfer, and Veronica Larsen. He was preceded in death by his parents and twin brother Donald. Visitation will be 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 21 at Hermann Funeral Home in Stockton. A memorial service will be at 1 p.m. on Thursday, December 22 at Christ Lutheran Church in Stockton. There will be a private burial at Wards Grove cemetery, which overlooks the Lawfer family farms. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to The Lawfer Legacy fund to promote agriculture in the area through scholarships and grants. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with Ron's family at www.hermannfuneralhome.com

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