



## Shirley Ann Clemons

December 14, 1934 - November 18, 2024

Shirley Ann Clemons, 89, was born on December 14, 1934 to a wonderful German family, Enno and Irene Ostendorf of Meservey, Iowa. She was welcomed home from the Mason City Park Hospital by her sister, Wanda, who was 5 years old and wanted to know if Shirley could be returned for a puppy. Enno thought about it for a minute, Irene said "No."

Shirley attended the enormous school in Meservey where she was active in band (Clarinet), went to the 1952 girl's 2-court basketball State Tournament (Go Rockets) where she almost set the state record in scoring (guard) and she beat out the other 5 girls in her class to become the Band Queen (way to go Shirley)!!!

Shirley started working at the Meservey Post Office in 1953 as a clerk and quickly worked her way up to become the Postmaster in 1985. She worked there for 39 years before she retired in 1992. She was known to go have lunch with her mother every day and hand deliver Irene her mail. No extra charge for that service. Well, maybe a dessert.

On a fateful day in 1955 Shirley went to Des Moines with her parents. While they were walking around Shirley was stopped and interviewed by "The Man On The Street" and had her answers and photo published in the Des Moines Register newspaper. A young gentleman from Thornton saw the article and photo, drove the 7 miles to Meservey and went to the filling station to ask if the attendant knew her. This young gentleman was informed that she lived up the street with her parents and worked at the Post Office but that he should

not get his hopes up because she had a boyfriend. This totally smitten young man wasn't about to let that stop him. He went to her door and asked her out on a date. The next day they went to a movie and then lunch. Shirley must have seen something she liked in this guy, Charles John Clemons, because she married him 2 years later on November 24, 1957, and their marriage lasted almost 67 years.

On another fateful day in October of 1964 Shirley and John were expecting their first and almost perfect child, Ken, when she went into labor 2 months early. They drove to the hospital in Mason City where an extremely premature baby was about to be born. The father said that this was not a good night because "The Fugitive" was on, starring David Janssen, Barry Morse and narrated by William Conrad so could the doctor keep the young baby in the oven a while longer. The doctor said it wasn't up to him and stormed off to change the tv channel.

Shirley's almost perfect child was born weighing under 2 pounds and wasn't given much of a chance to survive the night. The doctor left a note at the nurses station to have them inform him when the Clemons baby dies, but not to bother him until after the Dr. Kildare show. John saw the note, read it, and put it back. It wasn't until years later that he was told he should have kept it. How else would their son know who to inform when he finally passes away decades from now! In December 1964 they finally brought their son home and were able to hold him really for the first time. Ken started crying, Shirley started crying and John started crying because he knew his days of peace at home were at an end.

Shirley, John and Ken one summer day in the early 90's were outside The Surf Ballroom when they noticed a couple and their daughter who were intently looking at everything. They approached the family and started talking to them. Little did they know they were about to meet a family they would be quickly bonded with and feel like they were family. Royal Family actually, since they were Paul, Dot and Wendy King. The Kings of England. They started a relationship that would span nearly 35 years and countless trips across the

pond. There were many phone calls and gatherings and adventures. Paul and Dot came over in the Summers and Shirley and John would wish them a Happy Independence Day and they would respond with Happy Glorious Betrayal Day. Oh, good memories.

Shirley was very active with the American Legion Auxiliary and the United Methodist Church of Meservey. She and John have been friends with the pastors of the church from the 1950's until the church closed in 2016. Not because of Shirley, just because of dwindling numbers.

One of Shirley's favorite things to do was drive in her 1955 Chevy Bel Air convertible. She bought it new while working in the Post Office and sold it only to purchase it back again and restore it a few years later. She and John would enter it into car shows and win many trophies for it. She recently sold it to her nephew, Jay Grady of Texas, and we have no doubt she is waiting to go for a ride with him in it...again and again. Haunting him until he has to bring the car back to be restored starting the cycle once again.

In later years, Shirley and John would go to Florida for the winter and their neighbor, Constance Hartwig, would follow. They would stay in Clearwater, Florida because Clearwater and Clear Lake were easy to remember. They both had friends and family who retired out there. Mel and Esther James and Shirley's nephew, Jim Grady. They would enjoy card games, laughing at stories while sitting on their back patio and dining out. You know, regular snowbird activities.

Shirley was preceded in death by her parents Enno and Irene, sister Wanda, brother-in-law John, nephew Jerry, sisters and brothers-in-law and other close family and friends. She is known as a classy lady, a wonderful wife and mother, a hostess with glamor and style who could make an awesome Carrot Cake, Deviled Eggs and every Christmas a wild Fruit Cake. She is missed, but has gone to a better place and went without suffering or pain. She made the nurses and doctors laugh whenever they came to check on her at the end. She was and is Loved.

Because Shirley detested the cold a Celebration of Life will be held on June 7, 2025 at the United Methodist Church in Thornton Iowa. Go ahead, mark your calendar, services starting at 11 followed by a procession to the Pleasant View Cemetery and lunch afterwards. You don't need to bring your own lunch because lunch will be provided at a location named later. Cards may be sent to 1921 S. Shore Dr. Clear Lake, IA 50428. Donations in her name can go to the United Methodist Church in Thornton or the Salvation Army in Mason City.

# Cemetery Details

## Pleasant View Cemetery

130th St  
Thornton, IA 50479

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 7. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Thornton United Methodist Church  
404 Maple Street  
Thornton, IA 50479

## Celebration Of Life

JUN 7. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Thornton United Methodist Church  
404 Maple Street  
Thornton, IA 50479

# Tribute Wall

DF

“ Our heartfelt sympathies to John, Ken and family. Shirley was a family favorite. She was my father's cousin by virtue of their moms. Shirley told a very funny story at my mom's memorial service. We got reimmiscing at the memorial service about my Grandma Emma, my dad's mom. No one could figure out why on good days you got called Shirley by my grandmother. Turns out Shirley knew why - because she was Emma's favorite. So, I guess it was always a good day to be called Shirley by Emma Foss.

---

**Darsi Foss** - November 25, 2024 at 09:17 AM

JC

“ My sincere condolences to John, Ken, family, and her wealth of friends. Shirley was indeed a beautiful and classy lady. She showed her athleticism in more ways than basketball. I remember riding the full Ragbrai X11 with Shirley and friends. And she wasn't a teen at that point in time. I will treasure her kindness to me, as we traveled to Doctor appointments recently. The Lord is getting a lovely soul. Peace Shirley.

---

**Jackie Caffrey** - November 24, 2024 at 09:40 PM

JT

“ My condolences to Shirley's friends and family. My fondest memories of her were when she was postmaster at Meservey. I loved visiting her when I would get the mail. Both she and Sylvia Raecker encouraged and supported my love of stamp collecting as a child. I also recall that she was active in the Methodist church in Meservey. Again, my sympathies for your recent loss. All who knew her have precious memories of her, I'm sure. --Jeanette Tate

---

**Jeanette Tate** - November 22, 2024 at 01:56 AM

BH

“ *Our sympathy for your family*

---

**BARBARA hopkey** - November 21, 2024 at 03:35 PM