



## Ralph Doonan

May 5, 2014

Ralph Eugene Doonan (84) of Alexandria, MN unexpectedly passed away on May 5, 2014 with his immediate family by his side. Ralph, the youngest of 3 children, was born April 2, 1930, to John and Carrie (Hansen) Doonan at their country home in Clay Township, Shelby County, Iowa. He attended country school at Clay No. 3 through the 8th grade. He was baptized into the Christian faith through the Irwin Church of Christ and later became a member of the Merrill's Grove Baptist Church, at Fiscus. After moving to Minnesota they attended New life Christian Church. Ralph met the love of his life, Shirley Maye (Heilesen) Doonan, and swept her off her feet with an airplane ride on the day they met. They eventually married on December 27, 1952 and enjoyed 61 years of marriage. Ralph was drafted into the Army on February 16, 1953 and served his country in the Korean War. After returning home from Korea in January of 1955 they began farming on his family's home place. They were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Becky, in 1957. In March of 1958 the little family moved to their own farm in Audubon County, North of Fiscus. After making the decision to get out of farming, Ralph enjoyed laying asphalt roads with Western Engineering of Harlan and then the lively atmosphere of the students at Audubon High School. Ralph retired from maintenance at the school in 1992. In 1995, Ralph and Shirley moved to Minnesota to be closer to his grandchildren. An extraordinary grandfather, he regularly attended all of their extracurricular activities which included, dance recitals, soccer games and even a trip to Big Bear Mountain in California for

snowboarding Nationals. Ralph could always be found out in his shop working on one of his many projects. The door was always open for family, friends and neighbors to stop by for some good conversation and even a cup of coffee as they solved the world's problems. The door swung especially wide for any project his grandchildren came to him with. He and his grandson, Colin usually had a bicycle, go-kart, motorcycle or a car to work on. (the main criteria was that you needed to be able to ride in it or on it) His Granddaughters? Carrie and Caitlyn's projects leaned more to the crafty and creative. Whatever the project, he loved to spend time with them. Ralph enjoyed restoration projects, which included woodworking and International tractors. He was a member of the Pioneer Power Club for antique tractor preservation and restoration. His pride and joy was his 1945 International Model H that he had restored . The most recent project to be completed in the shop was the restoration of an old Hoosier cupboard which he and Becky did together. Other interests included a close car race, country music & a good old fashioned western. Ralph was preceded in death by his parents, John and Carrie (Hansen) Doonan, his sister, Edith (Doonan) Scott, his brother Earl, and his sister-in-law: Elaine (Jacobson) Doonan, his In-laws Arthur and Mary Heilesen, his brother and sister-in-law, Clark and Marjorie (Heilesen) Davey, his Brother-in-law, Gaylord Heilesen. He is survived by his wife, Shirley (Heilesen) Doonan, his daughter Becky (Doonan) Bower and her husband Craig of Alexandria, MN. He is also survived by his brother-in-law, Norman Scott of Botna, Iowa, brother and sister-in-law, Merlyn and Betty Heilesen of Kirkman, IA and sister-in-law Maxine Heilesen of Irwin, IA. His legacy of being a loving and dedicated husband, father, and grandfather will be carried forward by his 3 grandchildren and 4 great-grandsons: Colin and Darcy (Roline) Bower and their son Beckett Ralph of Rogers, MN; Carrie (Bower) and Bryan Casey and their 3 sons Cadence Conrad, Lauchlainn Rhys, and Mickenlee Anthem of Rochester, MN; and Caitlyn Bower of Alexandria, MN. Ralph was loved and will be greatly missed by numerous nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. Visitation will be held at Anderson Funeral Home

in Alexandria on Sunday, May 11 from 5 to 7 PM Memorial Service will be held at New Life Christian Church in Alexandria on Monday, May 12 at 2 PM with visitation one hour before the service. On Monday May 19th a Memorial Service will be held in Harlan, Iowa at the Pauley Funeral Home at 2:00 PM Instead of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Minnesota Eye Bank ([donatelife.net](http://donatelife.net)) The American Cancer Society, , or The Danish Immigrant Museum.