



Donald W. Happe

June 15, 1924 - March 3, 2026

Donald W. Happe, 101, was born in Carroll, Iowa on June 15, 1924, and passed away peacefully on March 3, 2026, at Sunrise Retirement Community in Sioux City. He lived a beautiful life. His work here was done.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 AM on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Spirit Lake, IA. Burial will take place in St. Margaret's Cemetery in Spirit Lake, IA. Arrangements are under the direction of the Robinson Funeral Home in Spirit Lake. Online condolences may be left at www.spiritlekefuneralhome.com

Don was the oldest of eight children born to Theodore and Loretta (Koll) Happe. He attended Buena Vista College in Storm Lake and the Chillicothe Business School in Missouri.

He served in the U.S. Army during World War II in the Machine Records Unit where he began his passion with computers. The MRU U.S. Army teams used IBM punch-card equipment to track personnel, supplies and casualties. These mobile units followed troops, often operating near combat zones, to provide immediate intelligence updates to leadership like Patton and Eisenhower.

Don married the "love of his life" Alyce R. Duncan on May 22, 1946, at St Joseph Church in Carroll, Iowa. He and Alyce welcomed thirteen children into this world. He cherished Alyce. He cherished his family. Don encouraged kindness, fairness, honesty and love. His smile lit up the room!

During his early business career, he served as field auditor for the Farmers Grain Dealers Association and later was employed at the Federal Land Bank

of Omaha as an accountant. He spent several years in sales and was also the owner of a steak house in Carroll.

The family moved to Sioux City in 1952 where Don began his career in the IBM department for what was then known as Associated Hospital Service, Inc. This became Blue Cross of Western Iowa and South Dakota and in 1963 he was appointed President of the company. As a member of the National Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Board of Directors, Don was instrumental in facilitating Blue Cross plans across the country to become Federal Intermediaries for Medicare in 1966. Don cherished the relationships he forged with many Blue Cross employees and associates throughout the country. He retired in 1986, after 34 years with the company. Former employees at Blue Cross fondly recalled his years there as the "Happy Days". Don enjoyed hunting, fishing and traveling. He excelled in computer literacy and in his retirement, he enjoyed surfing the internet to discover the world at his fingertips. He often opened his volume of National Geographic Journeys of a Lifetime in search of a far-away destination and then spent hours sightseeing virtually. After he moved to Sunrise in 2015, at the age of 90, his only complaint was that the internet speed wasn't fast enough.

Survivors include his siblings Dale (Joan), Jack (Geri), and Sr. Mary Loretta Happe; children Patricia Hagberg (Jim), Charles (Carol), Thomas (Charisse), Robert (Jane), Mary Clare Staber (Dave), Jean Waligoske (Dave), James (Kendra), Donna Kern (Tom), and Daniel (Brandee), son-in-law Brian Thomas (Jan) and many, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his family at Sunrise Retirement Community.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Alyce in 2000, daughter Paula Thomas in 2006, son John in 2020, and two infants, Joseph and Theresa. Also preceded in death by two grandsons, Nicholas Staber and Chad Thomas; brothers and sisters-in-law, Glen (Jan), Dick (Pat), and Gene (Jolene); sister and brother-in-law, Elaine (Bernie) Kult; sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Mary (John) Heider, and daughter-in-law, Jolene Happe.

The family wishes to acknowledge the exceptional compassionate and loving

care provided by the staff at Sunrise Retirement Community and St. Croix Hospice.

Memorials may be directed to Sunrise Retirement Community and/or St. Croix Hospice.

Upcoming Events

Mass of Christian Burial

JUN **30**. 10:30 AM (CT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church
1005 Hill Ave.
Spirit Lake, IA 51360
<http://www.stmarysspiritlake.org>