

December 14, 1936
Sioux Falls
October 15, 2003
Des Moines, Iowa

James Rasmussen

James Edwin Rasmussen, 66, died peacefully at his home October 15, 2003 surrounded by his family after a heroic battle against lung cancer.

James was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on December 14, 1936 to the late Nina and Lillis Rasmussen. He grew up in the town of Viborg, SD, and enjoyed horses and farming adventures with his rural friends. Jim graduated from Viborg High School in 1955 and attended Grandview College in Des Moines and Macalester College in St. Paul where he earned an accounting degree in 1959.

Jim married Sandra Kay Jensen on January 30, 1960 at

Luther Memorial Church in Des Moines. Luther Memorial was their home congregation and an important component of their lives. Jim accepted an accounting position at Glidden Paint Company in Chicago, Illinois, following military duty after graduation. Sandra and Jim lived in Chicago for almost three years before Jim accepted a position as an estimator at Sandra's family's bridge business, Jensen Construction Company of Des Moines. It is in this position that Jim flourished. Under his leadership and direction, the company ventured into constructing bridges over large rivers. Jim and his loyal employees became experts of the Missouri and other rivers in the middle section of the United States. Many of the bridges in the Des Moines metro area were constructed under Jim's direction. The bridge company expanded over the years to include related

construction ventures in mining, trucking, permit hauling, paving, road grinding and other ventures which were combined under the umbrella of The Rasmussen Group Inc. Jim is survived by hundreds of dedicated and talented employees who were blessed by his leadership.

In 1993, Jim was invited to serve as a member of the Racing Association of Central Iowa (RACI) that held the license for gaming at Prairie Meadows in Altoona. He was elected Chairman of the Board of RACI in 1995. The racetrack had been in bankruptcy and was a magnet for controversy. Nonetheless, Jim decided to give of his talents, namely his excellent business acumen and integrity, to help make Prairie Meadows successful. Jim donated thousands of hours of hard work over the years. During his involvement, Prairie Meadows contributed over 250 million dollars to

Polk County and local charities. His abilities to reach compromise, face challenges with a clear and calm head, and bring out the best in people were invaluable assets in his tenure with Prairie Meadows. Jim retired as Chairman of the Board of RACI in 2003.

Although Jim's life was full on a professional level, his greatest joy was family. During his 43 years of marriage to Sandra, they were blessed with three sons, Scott, Kurt and Jeff. While the children were still living at home, the family enjoyed sprint car racing with a car sponsored by the construction company. Jim and Sandra both loved horses and horseracing. The family spent hours playing and relaxing at their horse farm, River Ridge Ranch, and attending races at Prairie Meadows. They also loved to ski at Keystone, Colorado, and enjoyed boating in Florida. Many family and friends shared the trips and memories. The three sons each married, and the daughters-in-law, Coco, Lynette, and Brenda, gave Jim the joy of girls in the house. Jim's six grandchildren, Alex (14), Maria (11), Sanna, (9), Olivia (8), Karl (6) and Sammy (3) brought him immeasurable pride and joy. The family shared endless memories and precious moments together.

Viborg Enterprise
October 30, 2003