



Nicolaas Jacob Tensen

APR 27, 1931 - JUL 3, 2020



Scan to Visit

Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Tribute Wall	Page 5



Nicolaas Jacob Tensen

APR 27, 1931 - JUL 3, 2020

Nicolaas (Nick) Jacob Tensen went to his lord on Friday, July 3rd, 2020. Defined by family, faith, and farming, he will be fondly remembered by his family, friends, and communities in the Netherlands, Canada; and Ravenna, Michigan. Born on the farm of his youth in Groote Keeten, the Netherlands; on April 27th, 1931, he was a farmer from his childhood to the day of his death. He lived a full life and peacefully passed the way he spent his happiest days: working on the farm that he built. Nick's passion for agriculture and growing food was genuine, and shaped by his experiences growing up in the Netherlands under Nazi occupation during WWII. He often spoke of the horror of watching people suffering from starvation, and as a result he had a deep appreciation for the food from his family's farm. One of his most memorable days from that time was when his town was freed from the Nazis by the Canadian army, and a soldier handed him a banana from a tank. Every day he could for the rest of his life, Nick would eat a banana. In his later years he shared more stories about the war, both good and bad. Shaped by his horrific childhood experiences, he sincerely valued the veterans of his countries. Nick and his wife Gerrie Tensen (née Doppenberg) met when they were nineteen. They were deeply in love throughout their long marriage. He missed her greatly after her passing in 2018. Whenever visiting his childhood village, he tried to stop by the bridge where he saw Gerrie for the first time. After the war, Nick and Gerrie emigrated from the Netherlands to Canada. Nicolaas spoke of the pleasure of driving delivery trucks and farming in Ontario. In 1961 Nick, Gerrie, and their first three children were sponsored by Gerrie's sister and brother-in-law "Bernice and Jerry Kass" and legally immigrated to Michigan. In 1964 their youngest child was born an American citizen. With few resources, Nick and Gerrie began their own dairy farm: Tensen Acres, where they would farm well over 1000 acres with over 500 head of cattle. A respected farmer, he was recognized with awards such as the Muskegon County



Obituary

Nicolaas Jacob Tensen

APR 27, 1931 - JUL 3, 2020

Conservation Farm of the Year (2000); Muskegon County Environmental Excellence for Agricultural Stewardship (2001); and Muskegon County Farm Bureau Distinguished Services Award (2003). Nick was also featured in Successful Farming magazine (1994). He has served as the president of Muskegon County Farm Bureau, was on the board of the Muskegon County DHIA (Dairy Herd Improvement Association) and was the president of the Muskegon County Soil Conservation Board. Nick served as a 4-H leader and dairy superintendent at the Muskegon County Fair. He received awards for high milk production, often having the top herd in the country. He was an excellent Dutch dairy farmer and a good cow man. Nick was active in the First Reformed Church of Ravenna. He helped build the present sanctuary shortly after he and his family emigrated from Canada. A faithful member, he attended almost every Sunday he could. Over the years he served as a Deacon and an Elder. Nick served his community in many ways. He also served as a Trustee and Supervisor for Ravenna Township for a combined total of 36 years. Ravenna's acceptance of him "an immigrant" as an elected official was something Nick truly treasured. Nick was also proud that he was able to have voted in all three of the countries he lived in.

Nicolaas was preceded in death by his wife, Gerrie Tensen; parents Klaas Tensen and Gerritje Visser; son-in-law Dale (Margret) Link, sisters-in-law Grietje and Nin Doppenberg and brothers-in-law Jan Geertsema, Rob Leegwater; Lubbert, Wim, Gerrit, Jan and Arend Doppenberg. Nicolaas is survived by children Margret (Rick) Kingsbury and Geraldine (Arden) Eadie from Conklin, MI; Nicholas (Kathy) Tensen from Effingham, IL; and Arend (Paula) Tensen from Lyme, NH; sisters Annie Geertsema-Tensen, Trudy Leegwater-Tensen; brother Dick (Ellen) Tensen; sister-in-law Bernice (Jerry) Kass; sisters-in-law Janet, Norma, and Leona Doppenberg; and his twenty grandchildren, fourteen great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild. Memorials: Ravenna Area Fire Department or First Reformed Church of Ravenna.



Tribute Wall

Nicolaas Jacob Tensen

APR 27, 1931 - JUL 3, 2020

MS

Margaret Doppenberg And Her Huisband Aart Van Sligtenhorst posted:

Dear Family, We condole you with the loss of your father Nicolaas Jacob Tensen. We are very sorry for you and we think you will going to miss him very much. The only things left now are the good memoires you have got of your father. We wish you a lot of strength in this difficult time. Greetings from your cousin Margaret Doppenberg and her huisband Aart van Sligtenhorst, the daughter of Lubbert and Nin from Holland

November 1 at 8:00 PM

MB

Morse L. Brown December 15 at 3:56 PM

My name is Morse Brown. I served as District Conservationist with USDA Soil Conservationist in Muskegon County from 1973-1982. Nick Tensen we're Dairy farmers. Nick also served as Chairman of the Soil Conservation District Board. I helped Nick apply Conservation Practices on his farm in Ravenna, MI. I loved Nick and his family. He was a good man. Rest in Heaven Nick. 🙏

CS

Coralee Spoelman posted:

My parents (Truman & Doris Bliss) always thought so much of Mr. Tensen. My Dad often said, "They don't come any better than Nick." I remember in the last weeks of my Dad's life, he would take off walking and Mom couldn't find him. Mom would call Mrs. Tensen asking for help in finding Dad. Mom said, "I would stand outside looking across the field and here would come Nick on his big tractor--standing up so he could see better--looking for Trum." Mom knew Nick would drop everything to help Dad. Mr. Tensen will be sorely missed. He was a great man who was highly respected in the community.

November 1 at 8:00 PM

JD

John Arend Doppenberg posted:

He will be greatly missed by all the family. So glad I got to see him in November.

November 1 at 8:00 PM

JT

Jessie Tensen posted:

When I was little, I went to Michigan to visit the family on my dad's side. Opa was there and looked similar like my dad.. I do miss him every day on the family farm.. I used to ride tractors with Opa every day for a hour or two. Prayers for the whole family like the neatherlands and Michigan, IL and Lyme. I deeply miss opa... RIP (rest in peace).

November 1 at 8:00 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Nicolaas by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit