

## John R. Barger

June 14, 1927 - February 6, 2014

John "Johnny" R. Barger, 86, was called home to heaven on Thursday, February 6, 2014 at 10:20 p.m. Johnny passed away peacefully at home, in the arms of his loving wife, and surrounded by his children. He suffered from end-stage heart disease and Alzheimer's disease and was receiving hospice care at home since mid-January.

John was born, the first child of Glen T. Barger and Queenie (Fiechter) Barger, on June 14, 1927 in the Barger farm homestead in rural Wells County near Craigville. He and his brother William (Bill) K. Barger and Carol N. (nee Barger) Stern grew up on the farm, attending Sunday school at Little Vine and the Apostolic Christian Church. He attended school in Craigville and at Lancaster Central. Johnny graduated from

Lancaster Central in 1945.

The friends from Lancaster Central would prove to be important and precious all of John's life. His classmates and friends regularly traveled together, celebrated family milestones together, saw numerous New Years' come in together and conducted business among one another. Still, the remaining class of '45 meets annually to celebrate their friendships and common heritage.

Growing up on the farm and from a long line of farmers, Johnny helped his father with the family business, raising cows, hogs and cultivating the home 80 acres and several other farms in rural Adams and Wells counties. In the early years, he also helped raise 500 turkeys each season, which were dressed for Thanksgiving and Christmas for sale at Fort Wayne's Bar Street Market.

One of John's fondest memories of the trips to Bar Street Market, was the side excursions to Coney Island for a Coney Dog. Johnny kept that tradition alive, treating his children and grandchildren to hotdogs and stories through the years.

As a young farmer, Johnny ("Hans") joined Wells County's Rural Youth program. On one particular exchange with Huntington County's Rural Youth in 1949, Johnny was taken by a beautiful brunette named Barbara Louise Douglass who became the love of his life. Johnny and Barbara courted, and were married on August 19, 1951 in Jefferson Township Methodist Church in Huntington County and established their home in rural Kirkland Township in Adams County, across the section from the Wells County Barger homestead where John grew up.

A life-long farmer, Johnny supported local farming through efforts to improve drainage and ditching and with the National Farmers Organization. While cultivating the 160 acres of the Kirkland Township farm along with several other tracts, Johnny and his father, Glen, ran a milking operation until 1967. The family switched to a farrow-to-market hog operation at that time. Johnny maintained the hog business until his retirement from hog farming due to a heart attack in October 1994.

After retiring from the hog business, John continued to farm the land with the help of neighbor and dear friend, Joel Houk and his family. In 2010, Johnny fully retired from farming when he and his wife sold most of the acreage of the Kirkland Township farm at auction. The farm sold to Randy and

Bruce Barger, Johnny's first cousins once removed.

Upon marrying, Johnny and his wife, Barbara, became members of Pleasant Dale Church of the Brethren where they raised their family. His faith in Christ was reflected in service and love for family and friends. At Pleasant Dale John served as a Trustee, an usher, and helped Barbara with the Toddler Gym program.

John often said that his greatest sense of accomplishment came from putting his children through college and seeing each of them earn graduate degrees. Always loving, generous and willing to lend a helping hand, John will be remembered as a kind husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend. Although he is at home with his heavenly father, his presence on earth will be terribly missed.

Johnny is survived by his wife, Barbara L (nee Douglass) Barger, his daughter, Debi L. Huskins and her husband Jon J. Huskins of Zionsville, Indiana, his daughter Kathy A. Kolter and her husband Barry D. Kolter of rural Decatur, and his son, John Max Barger and his domestic partner Edwin Rosario, of Arlington, Virginia. John is survived by six grandchildren and five great grandchildren including: Travis G. Kolter and his wife Natalie (nee Sharp) Kolter and children Hallie, Kaden and Brylie of Tucson, Arizona; Natalie (nee Huskins) Razavi and her husband Ramin Razavi and their son Isaiah of Boulder, Colorado; Jared L. Kolter and his wife Lauren (nee Rotters) Kolter and their daughter, Della of Katy, Texas; Jordan C. Huskins and his wife Abigail (nee Mortenson) Huskins of Eldoret, Kenya; Kristen M. Kolter of Goshen, Indiana; and Lauren E. (nee Huskins) Church and her husband Ryan Church of Indianapolis. John is also survived by his sister, Carol N. Stern and her husband, Doyle Stern of Bluffton, his sister-in-law, Cora Barger (wife of William K. Barger, deceased) and four nephews, Tim Stern, Keith Barger, Mark Stern and Barry Barger.

John was preceded in death by his parents, Glen and Queenie, his brother Bill, and his niece Cindy S. Barger-Stapleton.

Funeral services will be held on Tuesday, February 11, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. in the Pleasant Dale Church of the Brethren with calling one hour prior. Family will receive friends at the Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home in Decatur on Monday, February 10, 2014 from 2 to 5 & 6 to 8 p.m.

Preferred memorials are to Family LifeCare Hospice in Berne or Pleasant Dale Boxes of Blessings.

**Zwick & Jahn Funeral Home online obit (accessed 11/9/2014)**