

interstate highway project and Dave was especially proud of the fact that he had a hand in some part of the surveying, design and construction of every mile of the I-94 and I-29 portions in the state. He earned his Civil Engineering degree from the School of Experience, Dedication and Hard Work and had the opportunity to “grandfather in” as a professional land surveyor. At the time he chose not to take advantage of that and did end up having some regrets about it later. His wife often wondered why he didn’t get the formal recognition for his expertise when normal people landscaping a back yard would maybe run a scraper and visually make it level, he, on the other hand, would have to borrow a transit and level and play the part of instrument man while his wife waved the rod to place grading stakes. His goal was to work for the NDDOT for 50 years and set a record for being the employee with the longest continuous employment record. He almost made it to 49 before he decided he’d had enough of the politics and changing work environment, along with other reasons.

As a young man, he met and dated Dorothy Dick of McClusky ND. They later married on November 20, 1960, in McClusky. They had two sons, Bruce Cameron, born August 29, 1961, and Brian David, born July 10, 1963. They divorced in 1974.

Some years later, working at his desk in the NDDOT’s Design Division, he called a young lady to come over and look at the aerial photos he had laid out on his drafting table. The young lady in question had recently been transferred from the Public Relations and Communications Department to the Programming and Surveys Division to take over the duties as the highway department’s aerial survey photographer and learn the ropes of running stereoplotters and photogrammetry. Her workspace when not flying was in the SW corner of the third floor and had to walk by the section Dave worked in, often several times throughout the day. So, when asked, she stopped by his desk. The photos were of a crack study of I-94 somewhere between New Salem and Dickinson. Dave’s job was to count the cracks in the photos and determine which sections would need to be priority for maintenance or reconstruction. He asked her why she didn’t focus on the cracks a little better. It took a moment, then she realized this was an unusual attempt at a pickup line and an opportunity to make introductions. This was the start of a very long history between Sandy and Dave.

One of their first dates also turned out to be one of his favorite stories and memories of their dating relationship. He spent a lot of time at the American Legion Club and took his date there to shoot pool. Sandy beat him at the first game of 8-Ball. Seeing an easy chance to get the table, another customer challenged. Sandy beat him, too. Another guy attempted with the same result. This scenario repeated itself at least two more times until all other challengers simply gave up and left the table for Dave to play at least one more game with this girl apparently channeling the skillset of a pool shark.

Dave also enjoyed working on crossword puzzles. He would work on the daily crossword in the Bismarck Tribune as a break from other drafting duties. This became an excuse for Sandy to stop at his desk and help with the crossword puzzle. It took a few years, but eventually they realized they had an “until death do us part” relationship. Before they met, Sandy had a self-imposed “3 dates and you’re out” rule. Dave was the first person to meet that criteria and make it to date #4. David Jenkins and Sandra Peterson were married at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Bismarck on July 19, 1986, and just recently celebrated their 38th wedding anniversary.

In the fall of 1995, they purchased a farmstead and some acreage just east of Wilton ND and Dave enjoyed working on his little farm. On August 11, 1998, they welcomed a daughter, Sydney Lynn, into their family.

While the American Legion Club was his favorite “watering hole,” Dave was also active with other entities and functions sponsored by this organization. He performed with their Drum and Bugle Corp for many years as a trumpet player. He prepared the food served for the 40 et 8’s spaghetti suppers that were a fundraiser for nursing scholarships and was proud of the secret spaghetti sauce recipe he developed and perfected over several months of testing when he first took on this project. He participated in the annual Open Your Heart Campaign, at the time, also sponsored by the American Legion.

He served with the North Dakota Army National Guard for about 25 years in several capacities utilizing his surveying and infrastructure construction skills but also gaining experience as army cook, chauffeur and other duties. He participated in numerous sharpshooter and marksmanship competitions held throughout the country and won several awards for his skill in handling various handguns and rifles. He retired from the Guard just a few months before September 11, 2001, and immediately wanted to reenlist but wasn’t allowed to do so. He was a very patriotic person and would have loved to have been able to serve his country in an active-duty soldier role.

He was a member of Sunne Evangelical Lutheran Church in rural Wilton and, up until a few years ago, had been a member of the Bismarck Elks Lodge 1199.

In recent years, primarily due to his declining health, his favorite activities included holding down his recliner and watching old westerns and WWII movies and documentaries. He especially enjoyed anything featuring John Wayne or Clint Eastwood. Other favorites were any movies involving martial arts, even if the dialogue was in Chinese, Japanese or Korean. Science fiction, especially post-apocalyptic themes and space fantasies were other top choices in his repertoire. DC and Marvel comic character-based movies also made the list. When he ran out of those, he could often be found watching YouTube and, as his wife fondly called them, “watching paint dry videos.”

It was about 2010 when he started having some medical issues that led to his eventual lung cancer diagnosis. In the years since he has had several returning bouts of cancer in addition to other health concerns. The cancer had always been localized in his lungs until March 2024 when it had returned not only in his lung but was now in his bones and spreading throughout his body. He finished radiation treatments in June and was doing well but took a rapid decline in the last few weeks. He was admitted to the hospital on Monday, July 29 and fought bravely to the very end. What is incredible to those of us who knew him is that for as compromised as his lungs were after the surgery removing most of his left lung and several rounds of radiation treatments to the right one, he never had to be on supplemental oxygen. Also, until his last trip to the hospital, he did not need more than a cane to help him walk.

He was not one known to openly show affection or offer a lot of praise, but he loved his family very much and was very proud of both his sons, daughter and granddaughter. Also, while he pretended to despise Sandy's passion for rescuing stray cats and dogs and utilizing the agricultural zoning with various animals and livestock through the years, he would be the first to allow a cat in the house and let it sleep on his lap.

He is survived by his wife, Sandra Peterson, Wilton ND; his sons, Bruce Jenkins and wife, Sue, of Hixson TN and their daughter, Kayla of Tucker GA; Brian Jenkins and Marla Stockert of Bismarck ND; daughter, Sydney Jenkins of Fargo ND; his sister, Pat Heinitz, of Urbana IA; mother-in-law, Ruby Peterson of Litchville ND, sisters-in-law, Sheila Cuypers (Tim) of Litchville; Shirlyn Larson (John) of McAllen TX; Wilma (Barth) Jenkins of Chassell MI. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews and their children.

He is preceded in death by his parents; his oldest sister, Beverly Dilger-Hanson; brothers, Barth and Tom; father-in-law, Sidney Peterson; sister-in-law, Sharon Seneker; brother-in-law, Al Heinitz; aunts, uncles and many cousins, and, a niece, Karen (Heinitz) Bennett.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Bismarck Cancer Center Foundation, North Dakota Veterans Cemetery, Wreaths Across America, or charitable organization of your choice.

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness...” (II Timothy 4:6-8a NIV)

DAVID EDWARD JENKINS, 86, of Wilton ND died peacefully in his sleep at Sanford Hospital in Bismarck ND on August 7, 2024, after a very long battle with cancer. His family was with him throughout this last hospital stay.

David was born January 22, 1938, in Bismarck ND to James Edward and Marion Leona (Thysell) Jenkins and was the second youngest of five children. He grew up south of Bismarck on a small farm adjacent to the present Missouri River Correctional Facility and had many stories of close encounters with the residents of the “State Farm” as it was commonly called. He spent a lot of time at the river fishing, swimming and even built a boat out of cottonwood to use for his Tom Sawyer type adventures. He liked to pretend he was Tarzan, climbing and playing in the giant cottonwoods that were on their property and spent a lot of hours helping his dad and brothers fell and chop those huge trees for firewood to heat their home. He grew up in a very self-sufficient family and carried many of those skills into adulthood. He enjoyed working on cars and other mechanical work and prided himself in keeping cars in top running order, especially his own. His first car was a 1938 Ford Model A “Rumble Seat” Roadster. He was immensely proud of that vehicle and owned it until his older brother dropped a cottonwood tree on it. His next car was a 1947 Hupmobile, later replaced by a 1952 Mercury. It was the Mercury that took him all over the state when he started working for the North Dakota Highway Department (later the North Dakota Department of Transportation) in 1956. He was proud of the 1961 Nash Rambler he bought for his parents when he started working for the state and making “real money.” He got that car back after his dad died and it remains in the “quonset” where it was stored when he brought it home. He also had an appreciation for old tractors and has the 8N Ford he grew up with; a 1947 International Cub that was the first tractor his dad owned and was the first one purchased in North Dakota. His last vehicle purchase, and one he was extremely proud of, was the brand new 2013 Toyota Tundra pickup, fully loaded with the latest bells and whistles and top of the line towing package, that he purchased without his wife's knowledge. This pickup was so new that many hours were spent driving the backroads and touring the entirety of northern Burleigh County so it would get the 500 miles it needed to have on the engine before he could use it to drive to Houghton MI to pick up the Case 1635C “skid steer” from his brother, Barth. That dirt mover, and a 3010 John Deere tractor his father-in-law helped him get at auction and had once belonged to ND Governor Fred G. Aandahl, had a lot of sentimental value to him.

He worked various jobs including that of driver and dispatcher for a Bismarck cab company and time spent as an apprentice electrician working alongside his dad for Melville Electric before embarking on what would become his career course starting with the ND Highway Department in 1956. This was at the time President Dwight D. Eisenhower had signed the bills allowing federal funding to build an interstate highway system. North Dakota was the first state to complete its portion of this