

IN LOVING MEMORY

Robert R. "Bob" Gommel

October 16, 1930 – August 29, 2026



A life of faith, family and the land

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Robert R. "Bob" Gommel, 95, passed away on August 29, 2026, at Oak Crest Retirement Community in DeKalb, Illinois.

Bob was born on October 16, 1930, in rural Malta, Illinois, to Reinhold and Hedwig (Honeck) Gommel. He married Donna Cedarholm on October 10, 1954, at St. John's Lutheran Church in Creston, Illinois. Bob and Donna shared 65 years of marriage and built a wonderful family life together with their three children and their families.

Bob truly loved working the land and caring for livestock. After graduating from Malta High School in 1948, he farmed alongside his father until he was called to serve in the U.S. Army in 1955. He was stationed in Schweinfurt, Germany. Following his return from military service, Bob resumed farming in the Malta area and continued actively farming until he was well into his 80s. He took great pride in his red tractors, straight rows of tall corn, bushy green soybean fields, and the great-tasting beef, pork, sweet corn and peas he raised. Through the years, he was also a good neighbor and friend to many throughout the Malta community.

Bob was a longtime member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Creston, where he faithfully served on a variety of committees and in leadership roles. He was also active in his community, serving on the Malta School Board and as a volunteer with the Malta Fire Department, and was a member of the Malta Lions Club. Bob was involved with several agricultural organizations as well, including the DeKalb County Farm Bureau, FS, ASCS, corn and soybean growers, and beef and pork producers, serving in a variety of leadership roles.

In their later years, Bob and Donna enjoyed traveling together, including trips to Germany, Norway and Sweden to visit the homelands of their ancestors. Following Donna's passing in 2019, Bob moved to Oak Crest Retirement Community in DeKalb, where he enjoyed participating in activities and treasured the many friendships he made there.

Above all, Bob will be remembered for his devotion to his family, his love of the land and the steady, faithful way he lived his life.

Bob is survived by his children, Dave (Jeanette) Gommel of Malta, Sharon (Jon) Popp of Gilbert, Iowa, and Mark (Laurie) Gommel of Malta; grandchildren, Julie (Andy) Bailey, Christy (Dan) Popenhagen, Katie Popp, Kaleb Popp, Maria (Bryan) Taylor, and Erik (Lori) Gommel; and great-grandsons, Jason Popenhagen, Leland Gommel, Elijah Gommel and Eldon Gommel.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Donna; his parents, Reinhold and Hedwig Gommel; and his sister, Dorothy (Bruce) Latimer.

Funeral services will be held on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church in Creston, Illinois, with the Rev. Terese Whitten officiating. The family will receive friends beginning at 9:30 a.m. until the time of the service. Burial will follow at Woodlawn Cemetery in Creston.

A celebration of Bob's life will also be held at Oak Crest Retirement Community at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family invites memorial gifts to St. John's Lutheran Church or the Malta Fire Department. These may be sent to the Gommel family in care of the Anderson Funeral Home, P.O. Box 605, 2011 South Fourth St., DeKalb, IL 60115.

They Buried a Farmer Today

They buried a farmer today,
Gave him back to the dirt from which he came.
Earlier his family and neighbors walk by,
Looking at memories of a simple man's life.
A table of photos, toy tractors and cards,
Telling the story of life on the farm.
There are the overalls he wore every day,
Except on Sunday, when he bowed his head to pray.
All things that kept him close to his roots.
Not born in a barn, but not far away,
From the fields where a boy learned how to play.
There are photos of his children and grandchildren, too,
And he and his wife, there are more than a few.
The smiles betray the hard times that he faced,
The worries and fears, the profits erased.
By weather and markets, out of his hands;
In the end, all he really had was his land.
The soil, the crops, and even the weeds,
To his way of thinking, that's all he would need,
To take care of his family, and help them stay safe,
From a faster-paced world, not too far away.
A good life, a simple life, that's what he led,
He'd struggled like most, but came out ahead.
And eventually, retirement, if ever a farmer could,
Stop worrying or working, but he did it for good.
He enjoyed his last years, and made sure that he thanked,
The good Lord above for his life and his land.
When his time ended, his loved ones shed tears,
Hoping he knew what he meant to them all through the years.
Today they gather, to remember and pray,
About a simple man they loved, who was there every day.
Through joy and sorrow, laughter and pain.
He was there when they needed him right up to the end.
Out to the cemetery, they carry him home,
To a small plot of land, just under a stone.
For they know he's at peace, and praying for them,
As they stand on a slope, not far from his land.
The service now over, they leave him alone,
Knowing some day, he'll greet them once more.
A dust cloud forms as the trucks drive away
They buried a farmer today.

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