



## Eugene Donald Lahammer

January 2, 1933 - September 4, 2023

Longtime journalist for the Associated Press, Gene Lahammer passed away on September 4th, 2023.

Gene, the oldest of six children, was born on January 2nd, 1933 during the Great Depression in the farmhouse built by his Norwegian-immigrant grandfather in Roberts County, South Dakota. The farm was sold in foreclosure when he was 1. He died at the age of 90. Gene was predeceased by his parents, Leonard and Viola, by brother Laverne and sisters Lavonne, Irene and Delores. Survivors include his wife Karen, brother Galen, five children (Doug, Rob, Peggy, Connie, Mary) and ten grandchildren.

Gene graduated from Veblen, South Dakota High School at the age of 16 as co-salutatorian, student council member and student newspaper editor. He borrowed money to attend Northern State Teachers College in Aberdeen, South Dakota, earning a degree in rural education. He began teaching in a one-room country school at 18. After three years, he gave up his draft deferment and joined the Army Security Agency. He graduated from Army Intelligence School with a Top-Secret clearance and served two years in Asia, earning promotions to Sergeant. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal for his work and had to sign a lifetime non-disclosure agreement before leaving for his overseas assignment. He was offered a job at the Pentagon after leaving the Security Agency in 1956 but decided to

continue his education.

Gene enrolled at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota where he served on the student council, was editor of the student newspaper and served in the Army Reserves and achieved the rank of Sergeant First Class. It was at Augustana where he met his future wife, Karen Margaret Krause. He graduated with honors in English and History and then studied American History in graduate school at the University of Illinois. He joined the Associated Press in Sioux Falls in 1960 and transferred to Fargo, North Dakota in 1961. That fall, he married Karen, at Zion Lutheran Church in Appleton, Minnesota - Karen's hometown.

Gene and Karen proudly raised five ambitious children in St. Louis Park, MN. Gene helped coach his children in various sports and with Karen placed a high priority on their education.

Gene transferred to the Minneapolis AP Bureau in 1965 and shifted to covering politics at the State Capitol in 1971. The University of Minnesota School of Journalism gave Gene the Alumni Achievement Award in 1991 and The Premack Board awarded him the Graven Award for Public Affairs reporting in 1993. He took early retirement in 1994 though he continued as an AP elections consultant for 18 years, marking a storied 52-year tenure with one of the world's largest news organizations. After retirement, he also worked for 16 years as an auxiliary member of the Star Tribune Editorial Board and freelanced for the New York Times and several magazines. Gene was honored when Governor Arne Carlson hosted his retirement dinner at the Governor's Mansion. Carlson issued a proclamation designating June 8, 1994 as Gene Lahammer Day in Minnesota.

After retirement, Gene and his best friend Eric Eskola had monthly brunches with various political and media figures that provided endless hours of spirited

debate on topics of the day.

Gene and Karen were active members of First Lutheran Church of St. Louis Park. Both served on the Church Council and Gene served two terms as congregation president. Gene became an avid bridge player later in his working career. His favorite partners by far were his two sons, Doug and Rob. They sometimes matched wits with some of the better players in Minnesota and Arizona tournaments. He obtained the status of Golden Age Master in bridge. Gene and Karen have had a winter condo in Arizona for more than 20 years where Gene was a Habitat for Humanity volunteer for 7 winters. They also enjoyed a lake home near Annandale, MN for 22 years.

Gene and Karen have five children. Doug and his wife, Heidi, live in Chesapeake, Virginia. They have two sons and a daughter. Rob and his wife, Julie, live in Minnetrista and have two sons. Peggy and her husband, Doug Ramler, split the year between Arizona and Annandale. She has two sons and four stepchildren. Connie resides in Burnsville and has a son and a daughter. Mary and her husband, Chad Flynn, live in Edina and have one daughter. Gene and Karen have 10 "perfect" grandchildren whom they adore: John, Halle Rose & Andrew Gene (Doug); Jacob & Luke (Rob); Max & Riley (Peggy); Jackson & Cami (Connie); and Bayliss Jean (Mary).

Gene was a proud veteran of the Korean Conflict. He will be buried with military honors in the Appleton City Cemetery at noon on Saturday, Sept. 9th where his wife of 62 years will eventually join him. The funeral will be held at 11AM on Friday, Sept. 8th with a visitation one hour before, all at:

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP 8. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Edina Chapel  
5000 West 50th & Highway 100  
Edina, MN 55436

## Chapel Service

SEP 8. 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM (CT)

Edina Chapel  
5000 West 50th & Highway 100  
Edina, MN 55436

# Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Chapel Service for Eugene Donald Lahammer in memory of Eugene Donald Lahammer



Washburn-McReavy - September 06, 2023 at 11:41 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Eugene Donald Lahammer.



September 07, 2023 at 03:25 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Eugene Donald Lahammer.

September 07, 2023 at 03:25 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Eugene Donald Lahammer.

September 07, 2023 at 03:04 PM

PR

“ *The Augustana University community mourns the loss of 1959 graduate, Eugene Lahammer. Our prayers go out to the Lahammer family in this time of grief.*



*Dear God, we give you thanks for the life of Eugene, your dear saint, and ask that you hold him now in your care just as you hold all who grieve in your love. Fill the Lahammer family with fond memories and the assurance that they are not alone. Amen.*

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**Paul Rasmussen** - September 06, 2023 at 04:24 PM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Eugene Donald Lahammer.*



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September 06, 2023 at 12:55 PM

PA

“ *Paulsen Lake Association purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of Eugene Donald Lahammer.*



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**Paulsen Lake Association** - September 06, 2023 at 12:15 PM

PA

“ *Paulsen Lake Association planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Eugene Donald Lahammer.*

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**Paulsen Lake Association** - September 06, 2023 at 12:15 PM

LF

“ Love The VWO and Friends purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Eugene Donald Lahammer.



Love The VWO and Friends - September 06, 2023 at 11:00 AM

LF

“ Love The VWO and Friends planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Eugene Donald Lahammer.

Love The VWO and Friends - September 06, 2023 at 11:00 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Eugene Donald Lahammer.



September 06, 2023 at 08:43 AM

FL

“ Family of Laverne Lahammer purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Eugene Donald Lahammer.



Family of Laverne Lahammer - September 05, 2023 at 08:20 PM

FL

“ Family of Laverne Lahammer planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Eugene Donald Lahammer.

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**Family of Laverne Lahammer** - September 05, 2023 at 08:20 PM