



Donald "Duck" Combs

February 14, 1937 - December 26, 2023

Donald Dean "Duck" Combs was born February 14, 1937 in Redding, Iowa to John Edman and Freda Jameson Combs. He passed away December 26, 2023. Right after his birth, Don was given the nickname, Duck, by a fun-loving uncle in reference to Donald Duck, the cartoon character introduced by Walt Disney in the same year. Duck grew up on farms in rural Ringgold and Taylor counties, where he developed a love for the outdoors and sports. His passion for sports, hunting, fishing, bird-dogs, and appreciation of nature were encouraged by his family and remained with him throughout his life.

Don graduated from Clearfield High School in 1955, where he excelled in baseball and basketball. On June 24, 1956, he married Judy Stewart at Prescott, Iowa. They are the parents of two sons, Jeffery and Victor. Don and Judy worked together to earn college degrees from Northwest Missouri State University. Don received a B.S. in secondary education with a major in social studies in 1961 and earned a M.S. in physical education in 1971. During his college years and several years after, Don enjoyed playing semi-pro softball on Maryville, Missouri, teams.

Don started a 35-year teaching/coaching career at Prescott, Iowa. After two years he returned to Missouri so Judy could finish college. He taught and coached three years at North Nodaway at Hopkins, Missouri; nine years at South Page at College Springs, Iowa; and 21 years at Davis County in

Bloomfield, Iowa. He taught American history and other social studies courses and taught many students to drive. During his coaching career, he coached nearly all sports. He was a head boys basketball coach from 1961-1990. Don was a fierce competitor and coached like he played. The teams he coached were known for their excellent physical condition, hustle, competitive spirit, and "never-give-up" style of play. Teams he coached at North Nodaway, South Page and Davis County won many conference championships in basketball, track, and baseball. Boys basketball teams he coached were state tournament contenders four times — at North Nodaway in 1964 in Missouri; then in 1977, 1982, and 1983 at Davis County in Iowa. Don was inducted into the Iowa Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 1992.

Don was an avid Cardinals baseball fan. At his first major league game, when he was a kid, he got Stan Musial's autograph. Musial was his idol from then on. Don passed his love of sports and active participation to both his sons.

Don loved the outdoors and enjoyed hunting and fishing throughout his life. An environment where there was upland game habitat was a priority in choosing communities to live. His passion was quail hunting with his English pointer and German shorthair dogs that he raised and trained. He hunted ducks many years with buddies from Missouri and enjoyed several fishing trips to Minnesota and Canada. As the years passed by, Duck was dismayed to see the natural environment change to the point wildlife was disappearing throughout the country. Starting in 1988, he and Judy purchased the first of three parcels of land in Davis County. They established many conservation practices, planted thousands of trees, re-established prairie grasses, built ponds and restored two log cabins from the mid-1800s. Duck enjoyed sharing the cabin farm with friends and especially with his grandchildren.

Don collected firearms and sporting collectibles his entire adult life. He specialized in Winchester Model 12 and Model 42 shotguns. In recent years,

he built a collection of Remington Model 12 rifles. Ever the competitor, he started creating displays and competing in gun shows. His displays included related accoutrements and advertising that he constantly searched to find. These displays won many awards at major gun shows throughout the country, including "Best of Show" five times with five different displays at the prestigious Colorado Trophy Show in Denver. In 1990, he collaborated with Ned Schwing to publish the book "The Model 42 Winchester," that featured many of his 42s and has become a well-known reference for collectors. Duck was a life member of the National Rifle Association, longtime member of the Ohio Gun Collectors Association, the Winchester Arms Collectors, the Remington Society of America, as well as several other associations. For many years he was active in Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, and Ducks Unlimited. He was a 61-year member of Circle Lodge Number 555, A.F. and A.M, in Prescott, Iowa.

Don was preceded in death by his parents, parents-in-law and two brothers-in-law. He is survived by his wife, Judy; two sons, Jeffery (Janaina) of Stockton, CA, and Victor (Michelle) of Pulaski, IA; three grandchildren, Hannah Combs Harris (Jack) of Los Angeles, CA, Regan Combs of San Diego, CA, and Roman Combs of Ames, IA; sister, Donna Mae Hiatt of Grant City, MO; sister-in-law Marilyn Routh of Whiting, IA; a niece and several nephews.

Duck was a people person. He loved interacting with people of all ages whether he knew them or not. He gleaned information from "old-timers" and fellow collectors as he sought them out at gun shows and auctions. In recent years he enjoyed making new friends with members of the Amish community, who were a great source of strength in his final months.

Funeral Services will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 30, 2023

at the Davis County High School in Bloomfield with Pastor Jim Wakelin officiating. Burial will be at the IOOF Cemetery in Bloomfield. Visitation will begin at noon on Friday at the Wagler Funeral Home in Bloomfield with the family present to greet friends from 5-7:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to Davis County A Club, Davis County Conservation, or Good Samaritan Hospice in Ottumwa.

Cemetery Details

IOOF Cemetery

620 North Madison Street
Bloomfield, IA 52537

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **29**. 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Wagler Funeral Home
304 West Jefferson Street
Bloomfield, IA 52537
(641) 664-3421
<https://www.waglerfuneralhome.com/>

Visitation with Family Present

DEC **29**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Wagler Funeral Home
304 West Jefferson Street
Bloomfield, IA 52537
(641) 664-3421
<https://www.waglerfuneralhome.com/>

Funeral Service

DEC **30**. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Davis County High School
503 E. Locust St.
Bloomfield, IA 52537

Tribute Wall

MS

“ *Some of the best times I had with Duck was helping him set up the displays at the Denver Gun show. I was great to help him and learn from him. He will always be a true mentor.*

Matt Stevenson

Matt Stevenson - January 04, 2024 at 08:34 PM

JC

What I remember you the most for (and was very thankful for) was when you helped us load up when nearly everyone else was gone). Did you see the cover of the 3rd quarter Remington Collectors Journal that was taken at the last time Duck was at Denver? He also had an article in the issue. Thank you for the kind words.

Judy Combs - January 12, 2024 at 06:01 PM

GH

“ *I met Don at a gun show in Sioux Falls, SD. I was writing an article for The Outdoorsmen magazine and it was going to be about the gun show. I sat down and talked to Don for quite a while and decided that most of the article needed to be about Don. He was very gracious to me with his time and carefully answering all my questions. The next year of the gun show I came back with a Winchester model 42 and a copy of the book Don helped write. He was kind enough to autograph the book and look at the gun for me. I could of sat and listened to his stories for hours! What a genuine, kind, smart, and positive person he was to meet! I will not forget this man.*

Gary Headrick - January 04, 2024 at 03:49 PM

JC

Thank you for your kind words, Duck gained much of his knowledge by listening to the stories, over many year, of those that came before him.

Judy Combs - January 12, 2024 at 06:18 PM

JW

“ Judy - You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers as you lean into each other for strength during this difficult time. Thank You for the honor of officiating at Duck's Celebration of Life Service. - Rev. & Mrs. Jim Wakelin

James H. Wakelin - December 30, 2023 at 09:55 AM

AF

“ Angela Olenius Rodgers Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald "Duck" Combs.

Angela Olenius Rodgers Family - December 29, 2023 at 02:19 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.



December 29, 2023 at 02:19 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.



December 29, 2023 at 02:11 PM

JS

“ Jake and Stefanie Steede planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald "Duck" Combs.

Jake and Stefanie Steede - December 29, 2023 at 02:11 PM

HS

“ Miss Judy, please accept our deepest sympathy for the loss of "Duck". We always enjoyed our visits with the two of you. We had many great conversation about guns, politics, sporting collectibles and history. We also enjoyed some great meals and staying at the cabin on the farm. These visits have left us with a lifetime of fond memories. God bless you sweet lady. Your Tennessee friends, Bill Orgain, Richard Salerno and Edward Black.

hudson shotwell - December 28, 2023 at 09:19 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.



December 28, 2023 at 08:30 PM

TF

“ The Ron Lough Family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.



The Ron Lough Family - December 28, 2023 at 01:38 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.*



December 28, 2023 at 10:49 AM



“ *Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.*



December 28, 2023 at 10:36 AM



“ *Rob, Bryan, Peg, Dan, Paula, Karen planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald "Duck" Combs.*

Rob, Bryan, Peg, Dan, Paula, Karen - December 28, 2023 at 10:25 AM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.*



December 28, 2023 at 10:25 AM

LH

“ Love, John, Rachel and Alexis Harris planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald "Duck" Combs.

Love, John, Rachel and Alexis Harris - December 28, 2023 at 02:05 AM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.



December 28, 2023 at 02:05 AM

RH

“ Our family is sending our heartfelt sympathies to Duck's family, especially to Judy and Hannah. What an incredible life lived that his obituary adequately describes. Big hugs to the family during this difficult time as you celebrate a life so well lived and mourn such a big loss.

Rachel Harris - December 28, 2023 at 01:59 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.



December 27, 2023 at 05:03 PM

SH

“ Don touched so many lives throughout his lifetime and I'm sure we are all better for the time spent with Mr. Combs, Don, Duck. I think of him often when I'm driving since he was my Driver's Ed. teacher. I will always remember him.

Samantha Henness - December 27, 2023 at 04:23 PM

JB

“ Duck showed great kindness to me. I had always heard about him and wrote him a letter asking about collecting advice. He told me to come on down and I did. I suppose I was there a handful of times and every time he had something new to show me. We had some good discussions about old guns, wildlife, politics, history and people. I'm really glad that I got to know him and learned a lot from him no better than what I knew him! My deepest condolences to his wife Judy and sons .

Jeremy Breckenridge - December 27, 2023 at 04:19 PM



“ Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald "Duck" Combs.



December 27, 2023 at 04:12 PM

JK

“ With deepest sympathy for a coach and teacher that I will always remember fondly for his kindness and laughter.

Joel B. Kincart - December 27, 2023 at 03:25 PM