



## Charles 'Ben' Stenglein

February 26, 1946 - June 4, 2021

In Lieu of flowers, Memorials to Waterloo Fire Dept;

Our beloved friend Ben was born February 26, 1946, to Charles and Daphne (Payne) Stenglein in Omaha, NE. Ben was well known at a young age and grew to become a staple throughout the Waterloo and Valley areas for years to come. In 1959, at age 13, Ben received second place in the Nebraska State Trap Shooting Championships, hitting 91 out of 100 rocks missing the title by only 1 rock. Ben obtained his pilot's license at age 16 and recalled how he and his dad would often lend a hand to others by flying those in medical need to destinations they could not drive to. Ben continued to be a giver his entire life, lending a hand or often showing up unexpected to help a neighbor or friend. Ben graduated from Valley High School in 1964.

Ben married Gail Standage and in 1967 they would welcome their first of three daughters, Amy. In 1969, he enlisted in the US Army where he graduated top 3 in his class serving the Vietnam-era by training helicopter pilots to fly airplanes in Colorado. Ben loved flying, he often reminisced with his brother-in-law about the incredible site of Huey helicopters flying over. In 1970, daughter Ann was born. Soon after, in 1971, Ben's service time came to an end and he returned to the Waterloo area.

Ben turned to work driving the old cabover style tractor and semi-trailer of the 1950s and 1960s. Ben enjoyed truck driving and years after he memorialized

his prior job by buying an old truck-tractor of his own. In 1977, daughter Kate was born.

In 1982, Ben along with his brother Steven, teamed up to run the family business known as Farmer Brown's. The two continued to fulfill the tradition of a well-respected traditional family restaurant, that their dad had started in 1964, for over 55 years. In 1985, the Papillion, Nebraska, Farmer Brown's was opened adding to the family commitment of good old fashioned family steakhouse values. Farmer Brown's Papillion would serve the community for 20 years until being sold during redevelopment in the area in 2005.

Ben and JoAnn were married in 1993, adding a familiar and friendly face to the Farmer Brown's family as the two often worked together or entertained family and friends. This union added son David (Rachel) to the family. The two were blessed with four grandkids, Amy; and Jacob, Evan, and Owen. Also dear to Ben's heart, was his four legged children, dogs Harley (who wouldn't let Ben leave without him for daytime work and prime rib at Farmer Brown's), Honeybear, and Tia; and Burt The Cat. Since Ben found Burt The Cat and took him home from behind Farmer Brown's, Ben felt obligated to build a neighborhood cathouse for all of Burt's friends that still called the Farmer Brown's backlot home.

Ben was an avid car collector for which he traded in and out over the years including purchase of a 1956 Lincoln. The Lincoln proved valuable upon showing up late to a Tom Petty concert with no parking, the security team liked the car so much and thought Ben was a VIP inside, so they ushered him up to parking in the front row! Ben had many interests and sometimes revisited passions from the past including trap shooting with the Fremont Trap Shooting Club. Ben loved being outdoors whether it was riding his Harley Davidson motorcycles, hunting for duck and geese, belonging to and feeding the Ducks Unlimited organization, planting sweet corn in the field behind Farmer Browns to share with his friends (which justified buying a combine), boating, or fishing. Ben even ventured on a bungee jumping trip.

Ben continued his love of being a pilot and flying his planes to destinations

whether it be with friends on a flight to the Fiesta Bowl in Tempe, AZ or to Johnson Lake to land on the grass air strip to spend time with family on the water. Flying into this grassfield was so rare, the crop duster pilots put tie downs in the field just for Ben. Ben went to the trouble of buying a plane with a proper tail sign "200W" so it would include a fun term that matched his display of natural humor, when he called the tower he professionally called out as "Two-Zero-Zero-WHISKEY" which he thought was worth a laugh! All kidding aside, it was well-known amongst the airport and to anyone that flew with Ben, he truly was an excellent and skilled pilot. Anyone who flew with Ben said his landings were perfect, no one realized they were already on the ground.

Ben enjoyed restoring vintage tractors such as his John Deere B, 520, and 730 and a Ford Model H. Ben joined the Elkhorn Valley Antique Tractor Club and, as with anything, fit in with those both young and old. Ben could often be found in his man cave, tinkering on his toys and making repairs. While Ben's hobbies cycled through and changed, his preferred drink did not, "Cutty Sark and water, please."

Fun on the water continued in other locations such as Lake Okoboji where he enjoyed listening to his friend The Piano Man sing and the Lake of the Ozarks where, as usual, Ben was the life of the party as "Captain Cutty" fired up his gas operated blender to begin serving margaritas to both friends and strangers in party cove. Ben loved to sing as he and JoAnn would often duet together at karaoke, "I Got You Babe." Ben's karaoke favorites were Amazing Grace and God Bless Texas and I've Got Friends in Low Places.

Ben was a Husker football fan and more recently became a dedicated fan to Husker volleyball. Ben incorporated his love for adventure with both family and friends, always leading the way to fun whether it be on vacation or family gatherings. Ben was a social butterfly, no matter who he was with or where he was going, Ben would make friends wherever he went. He could often be heard saying "Allrighty than" or "Lets blow this pop stand." Ben was very

thankful for his friends, his employee family, customers, and his family for all of their love and support through the years. Ben truly loved Farmer Brown's and valued all employees as family.

In 2019, the Stenglein family tradition in the restaurant business came to conclusion when Waterloo was sold to a local Waterloo family to continue the family-felt tradition; though the legend of Farmer Brown's and the love and passion Ben and Steven shared for their business, its employees, and its customers, will remain in many hearts forever.

Ben loved life and jumped right in to celebrating life and living it to the fullest making sure he shared his whole heartedness with others. He often displayed a big smile and a memorable laugh we can all still hear. Ben was extremely humble. When he ran across someone that may not have done the right thing, he would often say "Some people just don't know any better." Ben was ridiculously humorous, working to help others, and causing others to laugh and smile along with him. Here's to Ben as we say Cheers to Ben, or as he would say "Aspa-spumante," to a wonderful life lived touching so many hearts along the way!

Ben passed away with family by his side on June 4, 2021. Ben will forever be in our hearts and the memories he helped create will always be with us!

Preceded in death by his parents Charles and Daphne Stenglein, daughter Amy Stenglein and sister DeAnn Bratka; survived by wife Joann; daughters Ann Stenglein and Kate Stenglein; son David (Rachel) Spurgeon; grandchildren Amy Stenglein and Jacob, Evan and Owen Spurgeon; Brother Steven Stenglein;

Gathering with the family Monday, June 14 at Reichmuth Funeral Home from 4 to 7 PM; Condolences to [www. Reichmuthfuneralhomes.com](http://www.Reichmuthfuneralhomes.com)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 14. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Reichmuth Funeral Home-Elkhorn  
21901 W. Maple Rd.  
Elkhorn, NE 68022

# Tribute Wall



“ *Charles 'Ben' Stenglein*

December 10, 2022 at 09:12 AM



“ *Ben, DeAnn, Steven and I are 1st cousins; their dad and my mother were brother and sister. Having left Omaha for MN in 1968, i didn't see a lot of Ben. We did, however, always go to Farmer Brown's when we came home for visits and holidays. After we moved to OK, I would often run into NE "ex-patriots" or former Offutt AFB personnel. My 1st question was almost always, have you ever eaten at Farmer Brown's. More often than not, the answer was yes, often followed by we loved it and went back whenever we could. I was proud to tell them that they were my cousins. I'm sorry I didn't get to spend more time with you Ben. Maybe some day...*

**Dan Lawrence** - June 15, 2021 at 04:39 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Charles 'Ben' Stenglein.*



June 12, 2021 at 05:52 PM

LS

“ Love, The Smalley's purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Charles 'Ben' Stenglein.



Love, The Smalley's - June 12, 2021 at 12:14 PM

DK

“ Dear JoAnn and family. I am so sorry to hear about Ben passing away. Many fond memories of my Farmer Browns family. Just a great place to work.

Doug Kuhlman - June 12, 2021 at 09:32 AM

DP

Jo Ann and family so sorry to hear about the loss of Ben. He was a very good friend and shared many great times together, you are in our thoughts and prayers. Vickie and Dave Peters

David Peters - June 13, 2021 at 11:09 AM

TC

“ Our deepest sorrow goes out to the Stenglein family. Ben was a man you could count on. Always there with a joke and a good laugh. Ben will be missed greatly. Sincerely, The guy's Eric Keiser and Dan Chamberlain.

The Eric Keiser and Dan Chamberlain - June 09, 2021 at 08:04 PM

BF

“ So sorry to hear of Bens pssing have not seen him for along time but use to spend a lot of time at farmer Browns,Pryer to the family. Mrs Willis {Betty} Faux

Betty Faux - June 07, 2021 at 03:48 PM

BF

*I meant to say Prayers to the family.*

**Betty Faux** - June 07, 2021 at 04:05 PM

 Alan  
Chard

“ *So sorry to hear Ben's passing, He was a fun, funny great guy to be around! I will miss you my friend! Waterloo will not be the same without you around here! RIP!*

**Alan Chard** - June 07, 2021 at 01:46 PM

DF

“ *Dan & Gerdi Lawrence and Family purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Charles 'Ben' Stenglein.*



**Dan & Gerdi Lawrence and Family** - June 06, 2021 at 07:19 PM