

Gene B. Figura, 90, of Ames, passed away Monday, May 1, 2017 at Green Hills Health Care Center in Ames, Iowa. Funeral Services will be held 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 6, 2017 at Adams Funeral Home in Ames with visitation one hour prior to the service. Burial with military honors will follow at Ames Municipal Cemetery.

Gene was born April 13, 1927 to John and Anna (Hanacek) Figura in St. Paul, Minnesota and was the younger of two brothers. He graduated from high school in St. Paul in 1945. Gene was a sergeant in the Army Air Corps working as a sign artist during the last months of World War II. In June 1951, Gene received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting and Illustration from the Minneapolis School of Art, which he was able to attend thanks to the G.I. Bill. It was there that he met the love of his life, Adele Johnson. Gene and Adele married in October 1951. Within a couple of years, they moved from St. Paul to Ames, Iowa, where Adele's family resided.

In the mid-1950s, Gene began working at Collegiate Manufacturing Company. He became the head of the Art Department and designed the stuffed animals that were manufactured there. It was at Collegiate that he started inventing, starting with inventing tools that aided the work done in his department. Around 1967, Gene began looking into a new career in teaching at Iowa State University. He worked on his Masters Degrees to that end. He taught Art courses at ISU from 1968 until his retirement in 1993. During his retirement, Gene continued to create many drawn and painted works of art and to invent tools to make his life easier. Gene loved his wife, family, art and talking to people he met around town.

Gene is survived by his daughter, Lori (Craig) Evans, nieces and nephews Kristen (Harold) Beckham, Blaise (Elizabeth) Figura, Gregg (Lynn) Figura, Ann Schwartz, and many cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, C. John, and his wife, Adele.

Memorials may be made to the Octagon Center of the Arts, Ames, Iowa. Online condolences may be left at adamssoderstrum.com