

John Francis (Jack) Ruff was born on March 23, 1924, on the family farm in Birch Coulee Township, Renville County, Minnesota, to John and Ellen (Lorden) Ruff. He was baptized, served as an altar boy, and was confirmed at St. Patrick's Catholic Church north of Franklin. He attended country school in Birch Coulee Township and graduated as salutatorian from Franklin High School at 17. He graduated from the Mankato Business College and worked briefly at a Redwood Falls bank before devoting himself to farming, the career he loved for over 60 years.

On November 8, 1952, Jack married Eunice Reitter at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Morgan, Minnesota. Jack and Eunice shared 59 years of marriage and were blessed with five children.

Jack was an active member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Franklin, serving as a lector, usher, Eucharistic minister, Parish Council president, Cemetery Board member and trustee. He also belonged to the Knights of Columbus. Jack was a member of the Franklin Lions Club and enjoyed Catfish Days and small town life in Franklin.

Jack loved farming, spending time with family, friends, and grandchildren, telling stories, playing cards, music, dancing of any kind (ballroom dancing, square dancing, and the Irish jig on St. Patrick's Day), reading the paper and farm magazines, watching the Twins and the Vikings, winning at Jackpot Junction, and traveling. Two of the highlights of his life were visiting Ireland and attending Mass in Rome celebrated by the Pope.

When Jack needed assistance with his daily care, he became a resident of the Golden Living Center in Franklin in November of 2008 where he received excellent and loving care. He passed away there on January 22 at the age of 87, having recently been anointed.

Jack is survived by his wife Eunice of Franklin and children John Ruff of Wayzata, Mary Jo (Phil) Cole of Eden Prairie, Jeff Ruff of Franklin, Fr. Anthony (Bill) Ruff OSB of Collegeville, and Caroline (Jeff) Hickethier of Cornell, Wisconsin; grandchildren Catherine Cole and Jane Hickethier, sisters Loretta Ryan of Springfield and Agnes Jean Kickul of Mankato, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents John and Nellie Ruff and sisters Eileen Anderson of Buffalo Lake and Mary Schroeder Pyfferoen of St. Paul.

He lived his life in the same way he faced his death, with faith, kindness, humor, and humility. May he rest in peace.