



## John R. Cochran

February 7, 1920 - September 25, 2023

After a life filled with laughter, love, physical fitness, service to others, and love of God, John R. Cochran, 103, of Kearney passed away Monday, September 25, 2023 at Mt. Carmel Keens Memorial Home in Kearney. Fiercely independent, John drove his car until age 100, and lived independently until age 101. Funeral services will be 10:30 am Friday, September 29, 2023 at Kearney First United Methodist Church with Pastor Matt Fowler officiating. Interment will be held St. Joseph's Memorial Park in St. Joseph, MO. Visitation will be 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Thursday at O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home in Kearney.

Memorials are suggested to the Dr. John Cochran Scholarship Fund care of the University of Nebraska Kearney Foundation, 214 West 39th Street, Kearney, Nebraska 68845. Condolence may be shared online at [www.osrfh.com](http://www.osrfh.com). Services are entrusted to O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral and Cremation Services.

John Rodney Cochran was born February 7, 1920 in St. Joseph, Missouri to Floyd and Jesse (Ramser) Cochran. He was raised in St. Joseph, MO where he attended Lafayette High School. On September 27, 1941, John was united in marriage to his high school sweetheart and lifetime love, Averil C. Conger in St. Joseph, MO. John proudly served in the U.S. Army Air Corp from 1943-1946. As a life long learner, John then attended Utah State University where

he earned his bachelor's degree in 1949 and his masters degree in 1950. John later earned his Ph.D from the University of Utah in 1959. His career as a Speech Pathologist and Professor and ability to positively impact students and his peers, took him many places including, Southwest Texas State College, Eastern New Mexico University, University of Alaska, Lehman College of the Bronx, and the University of Nebraska-Kearney where he retired in 1987.

John lived a vibrant and active life, and was dedicated to his own personal fitness and encouraging others that he came in contact with while exercising at the Kearney YMCA. John regularly worked out until age 102, and was an inspiring example of health and good, clean living. In his younger years, John was a runner, and completed several marathons in New Mexico and Alaska. John cherished hiking up to Lone Pine Mesa while at his mountain cabin in Northern New Mexico, and walking the Oldfather Trail at Cottonmill Park. He regularly played pool at the Big Apple in Kearney, and always enjoyed a good game of Scrabble.

John enjoyed volunteering at Mt. Carmel Home, and regularly read the residents poetry, lead exercise classes, and sing-a-longs. He was a member of the Kearney First United Methodist Church where he served as a lay speaker and Sunday School teacher for many years. John was also a member of the American Speech Language and Hearing Association and American Psychological Association. John was extremely well read, and always had a word of encouragement and support for those he came into contact with.

Left to cherish his well lived life and inspiring example are his son, John Cochran and wife, Carol of Albuquerque, NM; daughter, Tammy Long of Kearney; grandchildren, Rachel Cochran, Melissa Mathis and Jenny Riggs.

John was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Averil Cochran; brother Floyd "Buddy" Cochran, Jr.; and his sister Marrillie Good.

# Cemetery Details

## St. Joseph Memorial Park

St. Joseph, MO

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **28**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Homes and Cremations  
4115 Ave N  
Kearney, NE 68847  
(308) 234-3500  
info@osrfh.com  
<https://www.osrfh.com>

## Funeral Service

SEP **29**. 10:30 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church  
4500 Linden Drive  
Kearney, NE 68847

# Tribute Wall

CF

“ I am one of three other siblings of Morris and Ploma Geiser, long time Methodist friends of John. Many times together for us was meals for special accassions at my folk's place or church, but John was always so caring and welcoming to us. He was also a great cook as my folks would often tell of what he would bring over or bring to a meal too. They went to England together and also to a cabin he had. John was the teacher of their long time Methodist crusaiders class. He thought very careful about his words. Both my parents passed shortly before John's passing, he will be missed and also a very special memory. We are thankful for having time with him through the years.

---

**Connie Faddis** - October 29, 2023 at 07:55 PM

DG

“ 1 file added to the album Uncle Rod



---

**Daniel Good** - October 15, 2023 at 09:05 PM

DG

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



---

**Daniel Good** - October 15, 2023 at 09:00 PM

DG

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



---

**Daniel Good** - October 15, 2023 at 07:24 PM

JG

*On his 100th birthday, looking sharp*

---

**Jeff Good** - October 16, 2023 at 09:10 PM

DG

“ 1 file added to the album Tribute Wall



---

**Daniel Good** - October 15, 2023 at 07:23 PM

LL

“ *I were so sad to hear of John's passing. He was such a wonderful man! As so many others, I met John up at the YMCA. He was such an inspiration to all of us! I have missed seeing his smiling face for the past couple of years when he moved to a nursing home. I'm sure he encouraged all the residents at Mt. Carmel when he moved there. He was such a blessing to all of us.*

---

**Linda Liebig** - October 12, 2023 at 11:32 AM

AS

“ John was so kind and personable. The Lord shone through him during his time here! I knew John and Avril as family friends since I was very young; and I have many memories of the singing clocks or wall decorations in their home, casseroles shared, coloring strawberry shortcake pictures, and lingering long even after everybody had mentioned it was time to go. As I got older, I would see John at the YMCA absolutely crushing it! I admired his approach to wellness because you could tell he never did it for vanity. He simply enjoyed it! One time my mom had a conversation with John that has stuck with us. They were talking about life and calling and giftings, and John told her how he felt the Lord called him to be a Barnabus. Not Paul who was on the forefront of the show, but the encourager and supporter that faithfully remained. I definitely remember John in that way; and I am joyful that he is enjoying ultimate closeness with the Lord now.

---

**Abigail Schescke** - September 28, 2023 at 07:12 PM