

## OBITUARIES

## CONNA JEANNE GRAHAM

Marengo

(This obituary is told in Conna's own voice, with the humor and honesty she admired in Erma Bombeck.)

Well, I finally did it. After 88 years of keeping everyone else on schedule, I slipped away on November 13, 2025—peacefully, at home, and surrounded by family. It was the first time in my life I wasn't the one reminding everyone else to hurry up.

My name is Conna Jeanne McGivern Graham, born in Marengo, Iowa, raised on a farm, and trained early to work hard, pray often, and distrust any recipe that said "season to taste." As the youngest of the five surviving McGivern children, I learned quickly that if you don't do something yourself, someone else will—and they'll do it wrong. This prepared me well for marriage and motherhood.

I graduated salutatorian of Marengo High School (I maintain the valedictorian cheated) and earned my Teacher's Certificate from the University of Iowa. I taught in a one-room schoolhouse, handling grades one through eight at once—excellent training for raising my three children, all valedictorians at Appleton (Wisconsin) West High School: Kim, Amy, and John Jr.

In June of 1957, I married John B. Graham, the love of my life, at St. Patrick's Church. We spent 68 years together, moving from Wisconsin to Tennessee and back again, then across the Atlantic to the UK and Germany. We retired early and landed in Peachtree City, Georgia. Wherever we lived, I mastered the grocery stores, joined the church, passed the driving test on the first try, and pretended not to notice when John got us lost. I adored Europe—except for one infamous "pants incident" on church steps in Berlin, which my son and husband still enjoy retelling.

I served as Chief Family Officer, Scheduler, Chauffeur, Editor, Listener-in-Chief, Creative Collaborator, and Finder of Lost Shoes. I cooked (eventually well), becoming known for banana pudding, tuna casserole, shepherd's pie, Jell-O, Congo Bars (one row always missing for quality control), and a Thanksgiving dressing that deserved its own national observance. I once confused red pepper with cinnamon in a Bundt cake. Relax—John survived, ate it anyway, and even said, "It doesn't taste that bad."

My joys included Downton Abbey, Lifetime movies, crime documentaries, Bridge, and the Chex Mix-plus-card-table social circuit. I cherished family traditions, especially my annual July 4th backyard "pool swim" from ladder to ladder—an Olympic event with exactly one undefeated competitor. I also maintained unquestioned dominance over the family dog, Jacques Darcel De Bon Graham, who adored me, acknowledged my authority, and proudly paraded my clothing through the house to build his nests in front of guests.

My Catholic faith guided me always—I served as a lay minister, volunteered, delivered Meals on Wheels, and believed kindness and good manners were never wasted.

I am preceded in death by my parents, Carrie and Frank, and my sisters Kathleen, Rita, and Rose. I am survived by my husband John; my brother Kevin; my children Kim, Amy, and John Jr.; my grandchildren Brent, Brittany, Amanda, Ashley, and Autumn; and my great-grandchildren Griffin, Adrienne, Gabe, Huntleigh, Aurora, Ruby, and Amelia. They called me Grandma, G-Maw, or Gigi—a title earned through decades of love, patience, and pretending not to see who tracked mud inside.

To my family: Thank you for the laughter, the stories, and for eating my casseroles even when they were "experimental." I am gone from sight, but not from your hearts. Carry on the traditions: Be kind, be curious, be interested in others, laugh at yourself, make the dressing from scratch, and remember—if you lost something, it is exactly where you left it.

My ashes will rest in Marengo, Iowa, alongside my parents and siblings, with a portion shared in Brooklyn, Iowa—because a heart can belong to more than one hometown.

A Memorial Celebration will be held in Marengo, Iowa, in the spring. Someone will forget the potato salad. Someone will blame my husband John. And I will be smiling.

(Yes, I edited that last line myself.)

P.S. "Our Senior Moments"—my 30-year collection of overheard gems, quips, and wisdom from older adults—is still being written. Son John is helping finish it. I like to think I'm contributing from heaven.



# Virtual field day to discuss impact of cover crops on water quality

Iowa State University Extension

AMES — Iowa Learning Farms, in partnership with the Iowa Nutrient Research Center, will host a virtual field day Thursday, March 12, at 1 p.m.

The event, which is available at no cost, will feature a live discussion with Dan Andersen, associate professor and extension agriculture engineering specialist at Iowa State University, Raj Raman, Morrill Professor of agricultural and biosystems engineering and Philip Rockson, agricultural and biosystems engineering graduate research assistant at Iowa State.

The virtual field day aims to provide valuable insights into the impacts of different cover crops systems and manure application methods on

water quality and corn yield.

"We've done a fair amount of work on the timing of manure application, looking at late fall manure versus early fall manure impacts on corn yield and water quality, knowing that some people are stressed about 'when can we get manure on in the fall,'" said Andersen.

"We saw huge timing responses, and one of the next questions was 'How much different is it when you move manure application to spring?'"

In this innovative project, funded in part by the Iowa Nutrient Research Center, the focus is on how timing affects yield and water quality when comparing fall and spring manure applications.

Any person interested

in cover crops, manure application or water quality is welcome to attend the virtual field day. Participants are also encouraged to bring any questions they would like to ask.

To participate in the live virtual field day, visit the [iowalearningfarms.org](http://iowalearningfarms.org) or join from a dial-in phone line: 646-876-9923 or 646-931-3860, with meeting ID 914 1198 4892.

The field day will be recorded and archived on the ILF Virtual Field Day Archive for future viewing.

Participants may be eligible for a Certified Crop Adviser board-approved continuing education unit. Information about how to apply for and receive the CEU will be provided at the end of the event.

**About Iowa Learn-**

**ing Farms**

Established in 2004, Iowa Learning Farms is building a Culture of Conservation by encouraging adoption of conservation practices. Farmers, researchers and ILF team members are working together to identify and implement the best management practices that improve water quality and soil health while remaining profitable.

Partners of Iowa Learning Farms include the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources, EPA Section 319 Grant Program, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and GROWMARK Inc.

## Marengo police calls

Pine Street.

Animal complaint: 1350 Eastern Ave., issued warning.

Parking complaint: 1295 Western Ave.

**FEB. 19**

Radar enforcement: Eastern Avenue/East Adams Street.

Animal complaint: 699 Clinton Ave.

**FEB. 20**

Suspicious vehicle: 642 E. Randolph St.

Extra patrol: 1640 Court Ave.; 1150 E. South St.; 250 Roberts Ave.; 359 E. Hilton St.; 150 Court Ave.; 2252 Highway 6 Trail; 2285 Highway 6 Trail; 1275 Marengo Ave.; 151 E. May St.; 1350 Eastern Ave.; 800 E. Marion St.; 700 E. Adams St.; 2205 Highway 6 Trail; 2187 Highway 6 Trail; 310 W. Dillin St.; 284 Western Ave.; 2161 Highway 6 Trail; 365 Western Ave.; 330 Western Ave.; 395 Western Ave.; 1640 Court Ave.

Radar enforcement: 489 E. Miller St.

Suspicious activity: 8 Bear Creek Dr., issued warning.

Business check: 2157 Highway 6 Trail.

**FEB. 18**

Extra patrol: 2187 Highway 6 Trail; 2157 Highway 6 Trail; 2192 Highway 6 Trail; 251 W. Miller St.; 452 Short Ave.; 500 Eastern Ave.; 594 Eastern Ave.; 700 E. Adams St.; 800 E. Marion St.; 798 E. Washington St.

Business check: 2205 Highway 6 Trail; 2161 Highway 6 Trail; 310 W. Dillin St.

Abandoned vehicle: 543 E. Hilton St., issued warning.

School patrol: 151 E. May St.

Suspicious activity: Lafayette Avenue/West

Ave., ambulance.

Bar check: 144 E. Washington St.; 194 E. Washington St.

**FEB. 21**

Extra patrol: 2157 Highway 6 Trail; 1640 Court Ave.; 2285 Highway 6 Trail; 1150 E. South St.; 1350 Eastern Ave.; 250 Roberts Ave.; 330 Western Ave.; 365 Western Ave.; 2252 Highway 6 Trail; 2253 Highway 6 Trail; 2285 Highway 6 Trail; 150 Court Ave.; 359 E. Hilton St.; 1275 Marengo Ave.; 151 E. May St.; 1350 Eastern Ave.; 800 E. Marion St.; 700 E. Adams St.; 500 Eastern Ave.; 2187 Highway 6 Trail; 310 W. Dillin St.; 284 Western Ave.; 395 Western Ave.; 2205 Highway 6 Trail; 282 Eastern Ave.; 251 W. Miller St.; 452 Short Ave.; 1640 Court Ave.

Suspicious activity: 201 E. Main St.

Radar enforcement: 489 E. Miller St.

Traffic stop: Eastern Avenue/East Adams Street, issued citation.

Business check: 1185 Court Ave.; 2157 Highway 6 Trail.

Bar check: 144 E. Washington St.; 194 E. Washington St.

**FEB. 22**

Extra patrol: 1640 Court Ave.; 250 Roberts Ave.; 1150 E. South St.; 1350 Eastern Ave.; 2285 Highway 6 Trail; 700 E. Adams St.; 365 Western Ave.; 284 Western Ave.; 2252

Highway 6 Trail; 2253 Highway 6 Trail; 2285 Highway 6 Trail; 2205 Highway 6 Trail; 2187 Highway 6 Trail; 150 Court Ave.; 2161 Highway 6 Trail; 310 W. Dillin St.; 395 Western Ave.; 251 W. Miller St.; 452 Short Ave.; 500 Eastern Ave.; 594 Eastern Ave.; 800 E. Marion St.; 798 E. Washington St.; 1350 Eastern Ave.

Business check: 310 W. Dillin St.; 2157 Highway 6 Trail.

Radar enforcement: 489 E. Miller St.

**FEB. 23**

Foot patrol: 901 Court Ave.

Business check: 2161 Highway 6 Trail; 2205 Highway 6 Trail; 280 Eastern Ave.; 2205 Highway 6 Trail; 1042 Marengo Ave.

Report follow-up: 153 E. Main St.

Extra patrol: 1640 Court Ave.; 250 Roberts Ave.; 365 Western Ave.; 157 E. Dillin St.; 251 W. Miller St.; 1640 Court Ave.; 150 Court Ave.; 2285 Highway 6 Trail; 500 Eastern Ave.

Traffic stop: West Miller Street/Western Avenue, issued warning; 200 E North Street, issued warning; Court Avenue/West Lucas Street, issued warning.

Radar enforcement: 1150 Eastern Ave.

## Iowa Valley school board proposes keeping tax levy the same

By Winona Whitaker, Hometown Current

MARENGO — Iowa Valley's school board proposed keeping its tax levy the same for the next fiscal year though its loan terms would allow a drop for a single year.

The board proposed keeping the tax rate for the next fiscal year at \$15.81. The bonds for the school improvements added about \$3 to the \$12 levy three years ago.

The board is in a position to drop the tax levy to \$13.78 for one year, but the rate would go back to \$15.81 the following year, said Iowa Valley Superintendent Curt Rhein-



A classroom at Iowa Valley Elementary School in August 2025. (Winona Whitaker/Hometown Current)

gans. he suggested the district keep the rate the same and stabilize some other funds.

People forget, said Rheingans, so raising

the levy after dropping it for year would be difficult. He recommended that the district put the

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