James W. (Jim) McGrew, 97, of Ankeny, IA, formerly of Waverly, died August 4, 2026 at the Mill Pond Retirement Community. Jim was born January 27, 1929 in Waterloo, Iowa, the son of James Addison and Ethel Groomes McGrew. Jim grew up in Cedar Falls, Iowa and graduated from Cedar Falls High School in 1946. After encouragement from his high school teachers and following in his mother's footsteps, Jim began his journey in the education field, attending Iowa State Teachers College (The University of Northern Iowa) and graduating in 1951 with a B.A. degree in Mathematics and Business Education. While in college he enlisted in the Army National Guard and served 10 years before retiring as a Second Lieutenant. Following college, he taught math and business in New Albin and Cedar Falls before coming to Waverly in 1955 to teach while beginning graduate work in his pursuit to become a school administrator. In 1956 he was appointed Junior High Principal in the Waverly district. He received his M.A. degree in Secondary School Administration from the State College of Iowa (The University of Northern Iowa) in 1958 and one year later became the first ever principal at the newly created Waverly-Shell Rock (W-SR) Junior High School, following the consolidation of the Waverly and Shell Rock districts.

On June 27, 1959, Jim was united in marriage to Marlene A. Sels at Second Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa. Jim immediately knew he had met the love of his life in 1956 when a "beautiful" young teacher became the new business instructor at W-SR High School. Marlene passed away on January 18, 2022.

Jim had a deep affection for the community of Waverly and was adamant about serving. He cherished his time at the W-SR Junior High and was very proud of the young people that passed through its doors. He was frequently heard saying "it's all about the kids" and he meant it, as he actively supported the academic, athletic and fine arts pursuits of his students. That commitment extended regionally and statewide as the president of the Northeast Iowa Secondary Principals Association and as a member of the Iowa High School Athletic Association Junior High Advisory Committee from 1970 to 1976 . Amidst the 41 years of service in the education field, he spent his entire administrative career of 33 years (and approximately 6,000 students) at W-SR, retiring in 1992. His service was recognized later that year by the W-SR district when the Junior High school auditorium was named in his honor. Following retirement, one of the things that brought him the most joy was running into a prior student or teacher and catching up or sharing a story. One of his favorite memories was five years ago when he received a Christmas card from an 88 year-old former "student" that dated back to his first teaching job.

Jim also gave back to the community in a variety of ways outside of school. He was a member of Trinity United Methodist Church, serving on numerous committees and teaching Sunday school with Marlene for 15 years. Jim was a member of the Waverly Jaycees, serving as treasurer. He also served in the Waverly Chamber of Commerce and was named president in 1975. He was a member of the Waverly Parks and Recreation Commission, The United Way Board and the Waverly Senior Citizens Board. Jim was named "Boss of the Year" by the Waverly Jaycees in 1978 and was later selected to the Waverly Heritage Days Hall of Fame in 2002. Jim enjoyed many sports including softball, table tennis, bowling, tennis and golf, and playing in the latter, he won the Waverly Golf Club handicap tournament in 1974. In his earlier years, Jim had a stellar career as a pitcher and shortstop as a member of several state championship contending fastpitch softball teams including the Martin Brothers, DuBois Builders, Craft-Cochran and Porter's teams in the Waterloo area, and in 1988 he was elected to the Iowa Men's Fastpitch Softball Hall of Fame. Jim was also an avid Iowa Hawkeye fan and attended many games with his family. Most importantly, Jim enjoyed spending time with his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and as recently as two years ago, played a round of golf while enjoying a month-long stay with his family in Arizona.

Jim will be remembered for his abiding faith, his profound love of family and community and his commitment to education. He is survived by two sons, Mark (Amy) McGrew of Polk City and Steve (Denise) McGrew of Corning, two brothers, Jean (Jacquie) McGrew of Northbrook, Illinois and Jay McGrew of Ankeny, two grandchildren, Allison (Alex) Michl of Clive and Ryan McGrew of West Des Moines, two step-grandchildren, Ally Sarchet of Ankeny and Sara (Jonathan) Schneider of Marcus, three great-grandchildren, Elijah,Tristan and Rowan Michl and three step-great-grandchildren, Ella Draper, Isaac Schneider and Anna Schneider.. He was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Marlene, his sister-in-law Kay McGrew, and his parents James A. and Ethel McGrew.

Memorial Services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Monday August 17, 2026 at Trinity United Methodist Church in Waverly with Pastor Kristina Roth-Klinck officiating. The family will greet friends for one hour prior to service time in the Wesley Foyer at the church. Memorials may be directed to Trinity United Methodist Church or the W-SR Community Schools Foundation and on-line condolences may be left at www.kaisercorson.com. Kaiser-Corson Funeral Home in Waverly is in charge of arrangements.