Richard "Deacon" Paul Umholtz Obituary

Richard “Deacon” Paul Umholtz, 86, passed away on October 12, 2026, in Lincoln, NE. He was born on November 8, 1939, in his grandmother’s home in Valley View, PA, to Anna and Paul Umholtz.

Raised in Highspire, PA, Deacon graduated from Steelton-Highspire High School in 1958, where he excelled in athletics, lettering in football, basketball, and baseball. His exploits in baseball are still talked about today. In fact, one of his former classmates recently used Google Earth to determine that Deacon’s batting practice balls traveled farther than those of the reigning MLB Home Run Derby Champion!

A couple of years after high school, Deacon met the love of his life, Carol Strawser. Shortly after they met, he joined the U.S. Air Force and promised to show her the world (which ended up being Kansas and Nebraska). **They married on September 21,1963, and moved to Topeka, KS, where Deacon worked as an aircraft mechanic at Forbes AFB. In 1967, they moved to Omaha, NE, when Deacon’s unit (55th OMS) transferred to Offutt AFB.**

In September 1969, the couple welcomed their first child, Steven. Just a few months later, Deacon received orders to serve in Thailand during the Vietnam War. In 1971, shortly after returning from Thailand, the family purchased their first home in Plattsmouth, NE. Their daughter, Darbi, joined the family in 1973.

At Offutt, Deacon worked on RC-135 and EC-135 “Looking Glass” aircraft. In the 1980s, he was promoted to a Phase Team Chief, overseeing aircraft inspections, a position he held until retiring from the Air Force as a MSgt in February 1987. Following his military career, Deacon continued serving others through his work at the Omaha VA Medical Center. He **eventually retired with 41 years of combined federal service.**

While living in Plattsmouth, the family was active in First United Methodist Church. After moving to Omaha in 1994, Carol and Deacon became members of King of Kings Lutheran Church.

Deacon’s love of sports remained a constant throughout his life. After high school, softball became his sport of choice. He began playing fast-pitch softball in Topeka before transitioning to slow-pitch in Omaha. Over the years, he played on and coached numerous championship teams, earning several All-Air Force and First Team All-American honors.

Eventually, player turned to spectator. In 1992, he and Carol attended their first Nebraska volleyball match and were hooked! A season ticket holder from 1994 until his passing, Deacon rarely missed a match. He loved being recognized as “The Roof Roof Roof Man” and took great pride in helping make the “Roof” chant a beloved Husker tradition.

When he wasn’t playing or watching sports, Deacon could often be found with a fishing rod in hand and a story ready to tell. He never met a stranger, was always quick with a compliment, and was as genuine as they come.

Deacon was preceded in death by his parents, his beloved wife of 57 years, Carol, and three brothers-in-law. He is survived by his children, Steven (Tammy) and Darbi; sisters, Nancy Conrad, Donna Newhouse, and Tina (Jimmy) McGovern; sister-in-law, JoAnn Strawser; and numerous nieces and nephews.