John Louis Martin, age 81, of Winona Minnesota, entered eternal life in heaven on September 18, 2014. A loving husband, caring father, adored grandfather and respected coach and athlete, he gracefully lost his battle with cancer while surrounded by his family.

Born and raised in Racine, Wisconsin, John often recalled fondly delivering coal or bakery goods to earn money as a youth. Following his enlistment in the U.S. Army in 1953 where he played in the Army’s European Football League, he enrolled at Wisconsin State College in LaCrosse where he played Center on the football team and earned a bachelor’s degree. In LaCrosse, John met his college sweetheart and love of his life, Mia Skaar. Together they raised three daughters in Winona and recently celebrated 57 years of marriage. They enjoyed living in Salt Lake City, Utah and skiing the mountains while he earned his PhD in Health from the University of Utah.

John’s career at Winona State University began in 1963 and he retired in 1993. Known mostly as “Coach,” John loved and respected his many swimmers and football players as sons of his own, who appreciated his humor and life lessons he taught. At WSU, he served as Professor, HPER Department Chair, Head Swimming Coach and Assistant Football Coach. A highlight of his coaching career was his appointment to the U.S.A. Olympic Committee for two Olympiads and was selected U.S.A. assistant coach during the 1973 World Student Games held in Moscow. John is a WSU, NAIA, NSIC and Minnesota Swimming and Diving Hall of Fame Inductee. John and Mia are WSU’s great football and basketball team fans. John’s favorite place was at his northern Wisconsin cabin where he could swim, boat and golf.

John is preceded in death by his mother, Roma, father Alphonse, brothers Jim and Jerry and survived by wife, Mia, children Siri (David) Smith, Kristi Martin, Jeni (Dan) Arnold; and his beloved grandchildren, Luke and Karin Smith, Nick, Cora and Mary Arnold; many Skaar and Martin family nieces and nephews, sisters and brothers in law.

Funeral services will be Monday, September 22, 2014 at 11 a.m., Central Lutheran Church, 259 W. Wabasha Street, Winona, with Rev. Wade Davick officiating. Interment will be at Woodlawn Cemetery, Winona with Military Burial Rites provided by the American Legion Leon J. Wetzel Post 9, Winona.

Visitation will be Sunday, September 21 from 4-7:30 p.m., at Fawcett-Junker Funeral Home, 1476 W. Broadway, Winona and at the church on Monday beginning at 10 a.m.

Words of sympathy or remembrance may be left at www.fawcett-junkerfuneralhome.com The family has established a John and Mia Martin Athletic Scholarship Fund and requests that in lieu of flowers memorials may be given in their name to WSU Foundation, 204 Somsen Hall, Winona, Minnesota 55987.