Everett (Ev) Harold Eiken, 72, of Winona died Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010, after living courageously with cancer for MANY years. In his fight, he endured what most could not withstand in order to continue celebrating his life with those he loved. Everett died peacefully at home, just as he wished, surrounded by loved ones who cared for him.

During a Jan. 28 snowstorm, Ev was born at home to Maynard and Hilda Eiken (Ferden). He grew up in the Rushford-Peterson area enjoying both the simplicity and challenges of rural farm life. He lived his life following his Reading and learning were true passions of Everett’s. He graduated from Peterson High School and furthered his education at Luther College. He did his master’s work at Winona State College and attained his doctorate at Colorado State College.

Ev’s compassion and drive to help others touched many lives during his 31 years of teaching at Winona State University. Ev had the ability to enhance the dignity of each individual while gently challenging them to become a better person. All who had the privilege of learning from him got so much more than an education. His essence and gift continues on in many communities through the service of the students he educated.

Ev was a longtime member of the Winona YMCA. He spent countless hours playing racquetball with family and friends. He enjoyed the competition and never let up on his opponent. He was in many local and national competitions earning him induction into the Racquetball Hall of Fame. His love of the game was only dimmed by his love of the camaraderie that he felt while he was with his friends. Ev was a devoted and loving family man. He adored his mother and spent a great deal of time playing rummy with her. He would always return to play again, even though she consistently would win most games.

Ev and his sister shared many passions. They enjoyed going to auctions together searching for just the right antique. His children, stepchildren and grandchildren meant the world to him. He enjoyed the fires in the quarry, picking and eating fresh berries from his gardens and just the sharing of laughter and love. Ev’s tenderness with his grandchildren was captivating. His legacy will live on because he did such a fine job raising his children. Ev was the most amazing husband, best friend and soul mate anyone could desire. He and his wife shared a beautiful and profound relationship. He expressed true unconditional love. His thoughtfulness and loving ways will be deeply missed.

Everett is survived by his wife, Kim Eiken (Kaminski); his stepchildren, Jacob, Hannah and Phillip Nitecki; his children, Beth Adams (Mike), Bret Eiken (Angela) and their mother Shirley Eiken (Wernager); his grandchildren, Evan Adams, Avery Adams, Halie Eiken and Brode Eiken; his mother, Hilda Eiken (Ferden); and his sister, Kaye Eiken (Allan Skalet). Ev was preceded in death by his father, Maynard Eiken.

Everett’s life experiences taught him to believe in the “Family of the Heart,” those dearest friends who become chosen family. Ev is survived by an extensive family of the heart that includes many individuals who dedicated steady time, energy and love to share his journey with him to the end of his life. The unparalleled empathy and fine skills of the Winona Area Hospice staff made Ev’s final weeks peaceful and pain free. The Eiken family wishes to extend their gratitude to all members of their family of the heart!

Join the family in commemorating Ev’s life at Hoff Funeral Home-Goodview Chapel, on Saturday, Jan. 9. Visitation will be from 3 to 5 p.m. with a celebration of life ceremony at 5 p.m. Share a memory of Ev with his family, sign his guestbook or view his video tribute when it becomes available at www.hofffuneral.com.