



Frederick E. Cota

June 17, 1938 - March 14, 2025

Frederick (Fred) Eugene Cota passed away on Friday morning (March 14, 2025) at his home in Mercer Wisconsin while in the care of his family, with the support of Compassus Hospice.

Fred was born in Mason City, Iowa in 1938, son of Paul & Mae (Kellum) Cota.

Growing up Fred was known for his love of animals and feathered friends which began at a young age and continued throughout his life. So much so that the Mason City Paper wrote an article with photo during his early high school years. The article was about Herman, a duckling he won at the North Iowa Fair that developed too much of a personality to become a Holiday Dinner, and who followed Fred around the neighborhood along with a rabbit and his dog, Spook. Just part of his menagerie that he kept at his parents' home on 3rd St. Fred also owned a mare named Blaze who gave him a colt in 1956, Blaze was kept out of town at a farm & Fred would ride his bike there, when he could not catch a ride, to be with her.

Fred began working at his uncle & aunt's business, Kellum Interiors, in 1953 and worked through high school learning residential design. He graduated from Holy Family High School in 1957 and was the Vice President of his class during his senior year.

Fred enlisted in the Air Force in March of 1958 and spent a majority of his service in Okinawa where his love for Asian Interior Design & Art began.

After returning home in 1962 Fred began working for a firm designing & constructing furniture. In 1963 he was awarded a scholarship to the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and with the sponsorship of Kellum Interiors Fred moved to Chicago, Illinois to begin his education in Interior Design. After completing his course work at Chicago Academy of Fine Arts he attended the Chicago School of Art and Design where he graduated with honors in 1966. His design contributions were included in locations such as Hallmark Cards, Inc of Kansas City, MO, Abbott Laboratories of Chicago and Rockford Memorial Hospital, Rockford Illinois.

In 1968 Fred began working for IBM Corporation in Chicago. Fred worked in various departments throughout their Architectural and Construction Division. During the few years of his career, he was the Regional Design Coordinator. Fred retired after 22 yrs of Service with IBM and began the next phase of life with his beloved wife and friend Nancy (Larsen).

Fred & Nancy were members of the Lake County Mounted Posse, which is a horse club based in Lake County, IL. They would go on various weekend and week-long trail rides with the group creating lifelong friendships. During these travels they discovered the beauty of the Shawnee National Forest of Southern Illinois. In 1996 they packed up all their critters and moved to an area in the forest near Karbers Ridge. There they bought 40 acres which became known as Inaway Farm. They were able to expand their flocks of various chickens, ducks, geese, guinea & exotic birds as well as their herds of goats, sheep, horses and beloved ponies. They spent over 28 years enjoying adventures and friendships in their treasured Shawnee.

Fred is survived by his wife, Nancy; his children, daughter Rachelle Cota &

husband Jerry Conklin, son Christain Cota & wife Jennifer; grandchildren, Eli Halwas & partner Taylor Blohm, Cassandra Mishler, Jesse Albert & wife Karlee, and Ashley Cota; great- granddaughters, Delilah Halwas-Nardi & Baby Girl on the way Albert; his beloved sister-in-law Marcia (John) Cota; cousin Susan Lotts; and various Nephews, Nieces & Cousins. He is further survived by his treasured dogs Phoebe & Calle and their beloved gelding Jubilee.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Paul & Mae Cota; sister, Joanne Austin; brother, John Cota; and various treasured uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins. Along with various beloved pets, horses, ponies and feathered friends.

To honor Fred's wishes, there will be no public funeral service. Fred will be cremated in Wisconsin and placed at Elmwood Cemetery in Mason City, Iowa on an undetermined date.

Fred's Family invites you to please privately celebrate Fred's memory in your own ways.

Fred's favorite charity was St Jude Children's Research Hospital and he would love that if you wish to honor his memory that a contribution may be made to St Jude in his name.

Tribute Wall



“ *Rachelle, Jerry and Cota family we are sorry to hear of your loss. Please accept our sincerest condolences. We are thinking of you during this difficult time.*

Lora Karpinski - March 19, 2025 at 10:09 AM