

John M. Ely, Jr.

John M. Ely, Jr., was born on February 17, 1919, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to John Montague Ely, Sr., and Laurel Sullivan Ely. He passed away on March 30, 2007, at the age of 88. He is survived by his wife, Shirley "Polly"; sons John M. Ely, III, and his wife Connie of Anamosa, and Nathaniel W. Ely of Madison, Wisconsin; daughter, Martha Ely Goralka and her husband Joseph of Antioch, California; two foster children, Charles M. Hudson of Iowa City and John Thomas of Tucson, Arizona; five grandchildren; and twelve great-grandchildren.

Ely was of the fourth generation of pioneer stock, who in 1844 settled on the site of what was to become the city of Cedar Rapids. He attended the Cedar Rapids public schools and graduated from Franklin High School in Cedar Rapids. He attended Coe College and the University of Iowa and graduated from Princeton University in 1941. He married Shirley Ward on June 20, 1942, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Ely served in the Merchant Marine from 1942 to 1945. He and Shirley returned to Cedar Rapids, where Ely worked as a purchasing agent for the Quaker Oats Company until his retirement in 1984.

Ely was interested in local, national, and international political and social issues. He was a lifelong civil rights activist and a dedicated humanitarian. While serving in the Iowa Legislature from 1961 to 1968, he sponsored the bill to repeal the death penalty and co-sponsored the fair housing bill in Iowa. He worked on many civil liberties issues and was instrumental in establishing the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

Ely was active in many civic committees and organizations. He served on the boards of Planned Parenthood and the Visiting Nurses Association and was president of the Oak Hill Cemetery Board. He was active in the United Nations Association, the Hawkeye Chapter of the Iowa Civil Liberties Union, the Iowa Railroad Passengers Association, and the YMCA. He was a member of the Cedar Rapids Rotary, the NAACP, the Peoples Unitarian-Universalist Church, and the Interreligious Council of Linn County. He was an advocate for world peace, social justice, equality, and diversity.

Ely was a Linn County Democrat. He served in the Iowa House of Representatives from 1961–1964 during the 59th and 60th General Assemblies. He served in the Iowa Senate from 1965–1969 during the 61st and 62nd General Assemblies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF IOWA: That in the passing of the Honorable John M. Ely, Jr., the State has lost an honored citizen and faithful and useful public servant, and that the Senate by this resolution expresses its appreciation of his service to the State and tenders its sympathy and kindest regards to the members of his family.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this resolution be spread upon the Journal of the Senate and that the Secretary of the Senate be instructed to forward an enrolled copy to the family of the deceased.

ROBERT M. HOGG
WALLY E. HORN
DAVID JOHNSON
Committee