



Robert D. Vernon

January 24, 1919 - August 30, 2012

Robert Darlington Vernon, age 93, of Okoboji, Iowa, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Thursday, August 30th at Keelson Harbor Assisted Living Facility.

Bob was born January 24th, 1919, in Oil City, Pennsylvania, the son of Norman D. and Katherine K. Vernon. He was the third of five children. He married the love of his life, Marian "Speck" Kennedy (deceased) on September 18th, 1945, in Estherville, Iowa. After attending Johns Hopkins University, he headed to Iowa to learn about the food business from an uncle in Ottumwa. While living and working in Cedar Rapids, he attended events at the University of Iowa and met his true love, Marian Kennedy. Always an entrepreneur, he started R.D. Vernon Company, a very successful food brokerage business in Iowa .

They went on to have seven children, 17 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren, all of whom will miss him dearly. In raising their children, Bob and Speck emphasized the importance of compassion, a strong work ethic and finding joy in life. The most important thing they taught their children, however, was about the importance of family. Every year around the fourth of July, they hosted their children and later, grandchildren at their house on Lake Okoboji.

Bob joined the army on June 26, 1941. He served his country in WWII with the 757th tank battalion and fought in Europe, Italy and Northern Africa. Bob was a member of the Iowa National Guard for 23 years, after which he retired as a Brigadier General. While raising a family, Bob spent his free time working with the Boy Scouts of America, starting a Culligan soft water franchise in Cedar Rapids, and took an active role in Rotary. Even upon retirement and up until a few years ago, he was active in the Rotary and the Dickinson County Taxpayers Association.

Bob was an avid swimmer, golfer and tennis player while attending the University of Okoboji where he was named Dean of Nocturnal Affairs. Swimming and fantasy football were his passions, both of which he continued until after he was 90. To his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Bob passed on his sense of humor, passion for life, his strong character and his drive to make a difference in the world.

Bob is survived by his sister, Catherine Weidler from Cheektowaga, NY; seventeen grandchildren, his seven children, John Vernon (Nancy) of West Des Moines, IA, James

Culligan Vernon (Patt) of Denver, CO, Susan Vernon Brigman of Colleyville, TX , Robert Darlington Vernon Jr. (Terri) of Coralville, IA, William Shallcross Vernon (Monica) of Cedar Rapids, IA, Samuel Hayden Vernon of Sheldon, IA, and Sarah Vernon Koines (Art)of Bethesda, MD.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00A.M. Friday, September 7, 2012, at St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Spirit Lake. Visitation will be held Thursday, September 6, 2012, from 4:00P.M. until 6:00P.M. at the Schuchert Funeral Home in Spirit Lake. In lieu of flowers, please send contributions to St. Albans Episcopal Church or the Dickinson County Taxpayers Association.

Comments



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you. Bob had such a zest for life as did Spec. It has always been inspiring to me. I have many wonderful memories of them both. As can be seen in the pictures and video they lived a full and happy life surrounded by their family and many friends. What more can one ask for?

Babs (Hoyt) Liesveld

Babs Liesveld - September 14, 2012 at 01:56 PM



“ Your dad was remarkable and of course I remember him well during those wonderful Okoboji summers. In particular, I remember the tenacity he had for life while enjoying it at the same time with fun and laughter. What wonderful character he passed on to you all! I am thinking of you in this time of sadness and the celebration of your Dad's life. Much love,
Christi (Vaubel) van Heek

Christi van Heek - September 04, 2012 at 06:41 AM



“ Thinking of all of you at this time. My sympathies and prayers . Will see you at the funeral. Anything I can do let me know. Your dad was a treasure.He is now in heaven enjoying your mom and they are both watching over all of you with great esteem.
Love Mary Kay

mary Kay Donovan - August 31, 2012 at 08:14 AM