



Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein

September 11, 1923 - August 26, 2019

Dr. Alfred Libby Klein, 95, of Spirit Lake passed away on Monday, August 26, 2019 at Accura Healthcare of Spirit Lake. A memorial service for Al will be held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at St. Albans Episcopal Church in Spirit Lake. Visitation will be held from 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday September 3, 2019 at the Schuchert-Lentz Funeral Home in Spirit Lake. Burial will take place at a later date in the Lakeview Cemetery in Spirit Lake.

Alfred Libby Klein was born in Highland Park, Illinois, on September 11, 1923. He was the son of Louis John Klein and Ruby Mae (Libby) Klein who made their home in Glencoe, Illinois. As a child Al played in tree houses with the neighborhood children and built rafts to lug down the creek to Lake Michigan. He was a member of St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church where he sang in the boys' choir. When he was in fourth grade, his family moved to Skokie, Illinois, where he later began his first job as a pre-teen playing drums for a dancing school. He later entered Evanston Township High School as a freshman, and, with the death of his father when Al was 15, his mother, his older brother Louis John Klein, Jr. and he moved to Evanston, Illinois.

At Evanston Township, Al played drums in the marching band and formed his first "big band." He later put himself through college playing for dances along the North Shore in the Chicago area. During those years, he was mentored by high school friend Bill Hobin who later became a well-known Hollywood

musician and producer.

Upon high school graduation in 1942, Al joined the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was told a reconnaissance plane was not available at that time for his training and was encouraged to go to college instead. He enrolled at Northwestern University in Evanston in pre-medicine. After a year at Northwestern, he learned that he had developed a heart condition which prevented him from serving in World War II. Al then entered the Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago where he graduated in 1946 as a result of an accelerated wartime program. Later, at the time of the Korean War, he enlisted in the medical corps of the U.S. Naval Reserves, commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. He was called for duty, but the next day he was notified that he did not need to report.

Al headed west after optometry school, searching for a place to set up an optometry practice and sail his boat. When he saw the City of Spirit Lake in 1947 with its surrounding lakes, he decided to open his practice there.

Soon after moving to Spirit Lake, Al met his future wife Sheila Jenson at a Spirit Lake High School football game. Originally from a farm near Newell, Iowa, she was a Spirit Lake fifth grade teacher, having received her teaching certificate from Buena Vista College in Storm Lake, Iowa. They were married in June of 1948 and raised their six children in their home on the outskirts of Spirit Lake on East Lake Okoboji.

Al wholeheartedly accepted his new community. He was a founding member of the Spirit Lake Noon Kiwanis Club in 1947 and served as its third president. Later he was honored to be selected "Citizen of the Years" in 1973-1974 and to receive a 70-year Kiwanis membership pin in 2018. He was also one of the founders of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in 1950, serving in many leadership roles over the years. While President of the Chamber of Commerce in 1953, he was inspired by having lived near Lake Michigan, one of the original Great

Lakes, to name the area lakes the "Iowa Great Lakes." In 1955 he was elected to the Spirit Lake City Council, but when the family moved outside the city limits onto East Lake in 1956, he could no longer serve on the city council. For a few years, he also served as a Sea Scout leader.

Because of his continuing love for the lakes, Al was a founder of the East Okoboji Lakes Improvement Corporation in 1968. Soon after, he was elected to the Iowa Great Lakes Sanitary District for thirty-one years, serving as chairman of the board of directors for twenty-five years. He was proud of the work both organizations did to promote clean lake water.

Al always said how happy he was to have chosen to become an optometrist. The first optometrist in Dickinson County, he began the pre-school eye check-up program, which became a model for Iowa and other states and later added third, fifth, and seventh grades to follow the students' progress. The partnership of Drs. Klein, Martin, Boeke, and Rose developed and expanded the optometry practice to offices in Spencer and Estherville, with additional optometrists joining over the years. On the state level, Al was active in the Iowa Optometric Association and served as president, along with being on the Iowa Optometric Board of Examiners for many years. He was also instrumental in the development of the Siouxland (Optical) Lab in Sheldon, Iowa, which made lenses for glasses, serving on its board of directors for many years. In addition, Al influenced many local students to become optometrists. He practiced optometry in Spirit Lake for over fifty years.

Al's love of music and support of the Spirit Lake schools continued through the years. He played drums in the Spirit Lake City Band and for many community events, facilitated the purchase of new high school band uniforms in the 1960s, helped co-chair successful bond issues for a new elementary and middle school, and was an active band parent. In 1979 his wife Sheila

and he were honored as co-chairs of the Spirit Lake Centennial Pageant, and he was later chosen Grand Marshall of the Spirit Lake Homecoming Parade. Al was always supportive of his children's activities and his family's community involvement.

Al's family will fondly remember his drumming to the music with his two rings on the steering wheel as they drove to vacation destinations. A catastrophe or a surprise occurred on nearly every trip – from being in an Old Faithful Lodge cabin during the 1959 earthquake in Yellowstone National Park to being trapped hundreds of feet below ground-level in a gold mine in Colorado during an electrical storm to watching it snow in New Orleans, Louisiana, during Christmas. In retirement, Al and Sheila had the good fortune to travel to many interesting places. They were at the top of Mt. Pilatus in Switzerland when they learned of the 911 catastrophe back home. Al also enjoyed fifty years of duck hunting trips to Canada with several of his close friends.

Al is survived by his wife of seventy-one years Sheila and six children: Sheryl (Henry) Hall of Spirit Lake; Alfred L. Klein, Jr., of Sherburn, Minnesota; Deborah (Dr. Kenneth) Thompson of Emporia, Kansas; Barbara (Dennis) Mochal of Stilwell, Kansas; Cara Klein (Mike Scalcucci) of Bradenton, Florida; and Dr. Trisha Werner (Paul Ysebaert) of Sarasota, Florida. He is also survived by grandchildren Abbi (Larry) Wajda of Spirit Lake; Libby (Ryan) Pfeiffer of Prairie Village, Kansas; Alfred L. Klein III of St. Paul, Minnesota; Tyler (Cassie) Thompson of Fairway, Kansas; Dylan (Audrey) Mochal of Shawnee, Kansas; Shayla Mochal of Madison, Wisconsin; Shelby Mochal of Madison, Wisconsin; and Emma Derbyshire of Sarasota, Florida; twelve great grandchildren; nephew Richard B. Klein of Lakewood, Colorado; and sister-in-law Sonya Blinkinsop of Colorado Springs, Colorado. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, and a grandson Seth Thompson.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be directed to the Spirit Lake Noon Kiwanis

Club, East Okoboji Lakes Improvement Corporation, or St. Alban's Episcopal Church.

Cemetery Details

Lake View Cemetery

2684 18th Street
Spirit Lake, IA

Previous Events

Service

SEP 4. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Spirit Lake, IA

Tribute Wall



“ *Very instrumental personality in the Spirit Lake Community. He will be greatly missed. May his soul rest in peace. Well done good and faithful servant.* ”



Kathleen Shaw - September 18, 2019 at 02:55 PM

DR

“ *Full name previous post...
Carl H. Ross* ”

Dr. Carl Ross - September 11, 2019 at 06:25 PM

DR

“ *Dr. Klein prescribed my first pair of glasses when I was in third grade. From that moment of vision being corrected I was hooked! Throughout the next few years he influenced me to consider a career in Optometry. He always appeared to be enjoying his practice and that made my decision for me. I have been practicing Optometry for almost 50 years and still enjoying it. Thank you Dr. K!!* ”

Dr. Carl H. Ross - September 11, 2019 at 06:19 PM

ML

“ *Our condolences to your family, what a nice man and a good customer.* ”

Motor Inn of Spirit Lake - September 07, 2019 at 01:03 PM

JN

“ *JEFF AND ROXANN NEWELL lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein*



JEFF AND ROXANN NEWELL - September 05, 2019 at 12:48 AM

JN

Our sympathies to your family for the loss of such a great husband, father, and citizen of Spirit Lake.

JEFF & ROXANN NEWELL - September 05, 2019 at 12:52 AM

SM

“ *Prayers to the family. I worked for Dr. Klein from 1978 to 1981. He was a very intelligent man and it was a great pleasure to work for him.*

Stephanie Mesner - September 03, 2019 at 02:13 PM

DR

“ *Don And Jean Reed lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein*



Don and Jean Reed - September 02, 2019 at 05:38 PM

WK

“ We send our hugs, prayers, and sympathies to the Klein family. All of you are such kind, thoughtful people. We know Dr. Klein had so much to do with how giving you all are as he chose to always give to others. He will be dearly thought of and missed, but we bet God has special plans for him.

Wayne and Diana (Doocy) Koppen - September 02, 2019 at 12:05 PM

DH

“ Sheryl-it was so nice to see you and your dad at the band concert at Accura recently. Dale always enjoyed seeing him and your mom when he dealt the weekly poker games and would remark about how nice they always were. The obituary is a beautiful testament of a life well-lived and how we can all aspire to do good things in this world.



Please accept our sympathy at this sad time and in the days ahead.

Dale and Laura Hanna - September 01, 2019 at 12:53 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein.



August 31, 2019 at 10:28 AM



“ Our sympathy to Doc's family, his friends and the Spirit lake community. A wonderful man who gave much to all he meet. Well.done .Doc..Heaven shines a bit brighter tonight.



Kathleen Shaw - August 30, 2019 at 10:58 PM

EB

“ I remember climbing the steps to his office as a little girl when it was above the law offices of the Bedell family. Treasured memories working for Dr. Rose, and the association getting to visit and see Doctor Klein more often because of the opportunity they afforded me. My deepest sympathy to your family may God bless.

Evalyine (Evy Hilliard) Billings - August 30, 2019 at 10:44 PM

DJ

“ Uncle Al and I share the same birthdate. Every year, when I was small, he sent me silver dollars for the number of years I was celebrating.... I think he stopped when I was seven as he realized where that was headed. Great man.

Diane Blinkinsop Johnson - August 30, 2019 at 06:15 PM

JA

“ Our sympathy to the Klein family.



Jerry & Cindy Axtell - August 30, 2019 at 06:04 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein.*



August 30, 2019 at 05:40 PM



“ *Brent & Sherry Peek purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein.*



Brent & Sherry Peek - August 30, 2019 at 03:19 PM



“ *What a huge loss of a kind, generous man. Dr. Klein was the main reason I chose optometry as my career choice. I admired and respected him greatly. Our families have been intertwined throughout many years. Our fathers hunted together and our entire families spent many memorable times together. Our hearts go out to the Klein family as this great man's life is celebrated.*
Jim and Deenie Schuchert

Deenie Schuchert - August 30, 2019 at 08:56 AM



“ *Bev And Vern Wittler lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein*



Bev and Vern Wittler - August 30, 2019 at 08:36 AM

BT

“ Bruce Thompson lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Bruce Thompson - August 29, 2019 at 11:12 PM

DB

“ My sincerest sympathy to the Klein family. Dr. Klein was such a huge influence in my life. I have loved being an Optometrist for 42 years, and he was a very influential part of my career decision. What a legacy he leaves for anyone who was lucky enough to have known him. I have such fond memories of our families boating and swimming together at the Klein home on weekends He will be missed greatly!
Dick and Kaki Bedell

Dick and Kaki Bedell - August 29, 2019 at 10:14 PM

DS

Dr Klein had a huge impact on our lives, as he is the reason I chose Optometry as my career choice. Our families have been intertwined for many years. Our fathers hunted together and our families enjoyed spending many happy times together. This kind, generous man will be greatly missed.
Jim and Deenie Schuchert

Deenie Schuchert - August 30, 2019 at 08:28 AM

LJ

“ Larry And Mary Ann Jansen lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



larry and mary Ann jansen - August 29, 2019 at 09:03 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein.*



August 29, 2019 at 03:48 PM



“ *Karen Krieger lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein*



Karen Krieger - August 29, 2019 at 01:24 PM



“ *What a wonderful man who left an impression on so many. Prayers to all.*



Peggy Rick - August 28, 2019 at 08:08 PM



“ *Jim & Kristi O'Neill lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein*



Jim & Kristi O'Neill - August 28, 2019 at 07:31 PM

NM

“ Norm Meinking lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



norm meinking - August 28, 2019 at 04:55 PM

KW

“ Kristie Wintz sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Kristie Wintz - August 28, 2019 at 04:55 PM

RH

“ Robbi And Jim Heath lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Robbi and Jim Heath - August 28, 2019 at 04:06 PM

BA

“ Beverly Atwell lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Beverly Atwell - August 28, 2019 at 03:59 PM

DR

“ Doug And Barb Ricke lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Doug and Barb Ricke - August 28, 2019 at 12:49 PM

TM

“ Sheila and Sheryl,
So sorry to hear of Doc's death. You all are in my prayers and I will remember Doc at Mass this evening.
Fr. Carl+

The Rev. Carl D. Mann - August 28, 2019 at 12:05 PM

GB

“ Greg & Dee Baloun lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Greg & Dee Baloun - August 28, 2019 at 11:26 AM

TO

“ Terri Eckerman Olerud lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Terri Eckerman Olerud - August 28, 2019 at 10:28 AM

SS

“ Our sincerest sympathies to the family of Dr. Al. What a legacy he has left to so many.

Stan and Rhea Sybesma

Stan Sybesma - August 28, 2019 at 09:12 AM

VM

“ Vicki Vos Milverstedt lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



vicki vos milverstedt - August 28, 2019 at 08:58 AM

FK

“ Fred Kaminska lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Fred Kaminska - August 28, 2019 at 08:50 AM

DA

“ Dan lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



dan - August 28, 2019 at 08:49 AM

JH

“ Thoughts & Prayers to the Klein family, Al will be missed.

JoLynn Harms - August 28, 2019 at 12:59 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein.



August 27, 2019 at 10:12 PM

NR

“ Nancy Radcliffe lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Nancy Radcliffe - August 27, 2019 at 09:46 PM

NR

Sincerest sympathy to the Klein Family.

Nancy Radcliffe - August 27, 2019 at 09:48 PM

RM

“ Reba And Alan Munson lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Reba And Alan Munson - August 27, 2019 at 09:27 PM

JH

“ Johnny Huntsinger lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Johnny Huntsinger - August 27, 2019 at 08:31 PM

DB

“ My sympathy to your family.

Dayle Broocks



Dayle Broocks - August 27, 2019 at 07:54 PM

TO

“ My family and the Kleins have been intertwined since the beginning of St. Albans, I have always admired Al's leadership for our church, community and the lakes region. His efforts set a high bar to reach as a citizen of our church, community and lakes region my very sincere condolences for Sheila and the family



Terry Osgerby - August 27, 2019 at 07:06 PM

NR

“ Nancy Rickman lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Nancy Rickman - August 27, 2019 at 06:41 PM

BC

“ Bill And Jackie (DeVoll) Carpenter lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Bill and Jackie (DeVoll) Carpenter - August 27, 2019 at 06:05 PM

RC

“ Ron And Sharon Crowley lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Ron and Sharon Crowley - August 27, 2019 at 05:49 PM

RC

Deepest sympathy to the Klein and Hall families.

Ron and Sharon Crowley - August 27, 2019 at 05:50 PM

WU

“ Wanda Hartman Untiedt lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Wanda Hartman Untiedt - August 27, 2019 at 05:35 PM

NR

“ Nancy Rees lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Nancy Rees - August 27, 2019 at 04:11 PM

JC

“ Jeff And Linda Christoffer lit a candle in memory of Dr. Alfred "Al" Libby Klein



Jeff and Linda Christoffer - August 27, 2019 at 04:10 PM