

William Edwards, 84

July 4, 1922 - June 9, 2007

CLARION — William Delbert Edwards was born July 4, 1922, on a farm in Audubon County son of Roy and Gretta (Yager) Edwards. Soon after he was born Bill moved with his family, to be with relatives, to a ranch in central Montana. His family stayed there until the height of the Great Depression, returning to Audubon County in 1936. He attended high school in Viola Center and played on the basketball team, graduating in 1940.

Bill married his high school sweetheart, Barbara (Caldwell) Nov. 28, 1941. The young couple drove Route 66 in a 1938 Ford to Burbank, CA and began working at Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. One week later Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Bill continued to work at Lockheed until 1943, when he felt it was his duty to enlist in the Army Air Corps. He went in as an Aviation Cadet and trained as a Bombardier, serving at several bases for the duration of World War II, and was honorably discharged in 1946. While working in a plumbing shop in Audubon Bill was injured and he decided to use the G.I. Bill to enroll at Iowa State University. He graduated with honors four years later, in 1952, with a degree in Agricultural Education. He lived with Barbara and their three children in Pammel Court while in Ames. He was a teacher of Vocational Agriculture for one year in Iowa Falls and after that in Shelby-Tenant Schools. He started a farm supply and chemical fertilizer business in Shelby in 1953. The business grew to serve farmers in Shelby, Pottawattamie, and Harrison counties. The fertilizer business was sold to Gulf Oil Corporation in 1965 and he became an employee of that company. He rose to the position of Regional Manager and lived briefly in Harlan and Forest City. He lived in Shawnee Mission, KS and worked in Kansas City, MO until 1971. Bill returned to Iowa at that time, settling in Clarion and working as a Farm Manager for Sandage Real Estate and Farm Management. In 1979 he formed Edwards Real Estate with his eldest son. In 1982 he became semi-retired from business but continued to stay active, farming and managing his land. He and Barbara traveled extensively in a motor home, touring most of North America and visiting Europe twice. They divided their time between homes in Clarion and Tucson, AZ for many years. He served as a Rotary International District Governor and Wright County Republican Chairman. He was also a Mason, Shriner, and American Legion and Iowa State Alumni Association member. He was a member of the Clarion United Methodist Church and served on many of its committees. He died June 9, 2007 at the Wright Medical Center at age 84.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, Roy and Gretta Edwards; an infant brother, Gale; and one brother, Roydon. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; a daughter, Ellen Jessen of Johnston; two sons, Paul (Diane), of Clarion, and Chet (Lynn) of Portland, OR; six grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren; one sister, Nita Farnham, of DeWitt; and two brothers, Dale (Ruth) of Audubon, and Ron (Sue), of Ankeny.

Funeral services were held June 13, 2007, at the United Methodist Church in Clarion with Pastor Mike Druhl officiating. Burial was in the Evergreen Cemetery in Clarion. Honorary casket bearers were Duane Sandage, Terry Evans, Jim Tausz, Lowell Lynch, Roger Sumners and Gene Allen. Casket bearers were Ron Maahs, Kent Kirstein, Mick Thomas, Marc Wornack, Trenton Smiley, Alex Edwards and Frank Gregorich. Ewing Dugger Helgeson Funeral Home in Clarion in charge of arrangements.

