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Raymond Heesch, 81

March 9, 1920 – March 3, 2002

HARLINGEN, TX – Raymond Frederick Heesch, son of John W. Heesch and Lena Siemsen Heesch, was born on a farm 6 1/2 miles southwest of Avoca, March 9, 1920. He moved to Avoca, with his parents at the age of nine years and grew up there, graduating with the Class of 1937 from Avoca High School. With the exception of two years, 1939 and 1940 when he worked at Larsen's Sho Store in Harlan, and the two years he spent in the Army during WW II, he lived his entire life in Avoca. From Feb. 15, 1941 until Aug. 1, 1981, he operated Ray's Shoe Store with the exception of two years he spent in the service. After his retirement in 1981, he and his wife, Carol, spent half of each year, during the winter months in Texas, until the fall of 1999 when they moved to Texas year round. During the 40 years he was in business in Avoca, his civic duties were numerous and included being the commander of the American Legion Post #227 of Avoca. He was both the president and secretary at different times of the Avoca Businessmen's Club and the Community Club. He helped coach baseball for five years, was on the East Pottawattamie County Fair Board for five years, including two years as the president of the Board. He was the Cub Scout master for two years and on the City of Avoca Planning Commission for five years. He helped the young people of Avoca organize two team basketball, both boys and girls, and coached them during this time. He worked on many committees for the betterment of Avoca, including the golf course. During Avoca's Centennial Year of 1969, he was the chairman of the Special Events Division.

He married Pauline Finken of Harlan, in 1941, and to this union four children were born. He later married Carol Pelzer Pont in July of 1972. He died at his residence March 3, 2002, at age 81 years.

Ray is survived by his wife, Carol Heesch of Harlingen, TX; daughters, Dianne Fell (Gary) of Burlington; Karen Allen (Richard) of Springfield, VA; Mary Jean Mogle (Roger) of Seminole, FL; and his son, Roger Heesch of Hickory, NC; his sister, Mathilda (Tillie) Engel of Avoca; nine grandchildren, three stepdaughters; eight step-grandchildren and one step-great granddaughter.

Funeral services were held in Harlingen March 8, 2002, at Grace Lutheran Church. Funeral services will be planned for the Avoca area at a later date. Knutson Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.