

Wm. Merlyn Heilesen, 86

Aug. 8, 1928 - Jan. 18, 2015

IRWIN — William Merlyn Heilesen was born on August 8, 1928 to Arthur and Mary (Constable) Heilesen at the family farm south of Irwin. Merlyn went to Danway Country School. While growing up he played baseball and basketball. He graduated from Kirkman High School in 1945 at the age of sixteen. After graduation he farmed with his father and brother on the Heilesen and Sons Farms.

Merlyn met his bride to be Betty Lou Radford before being drafted and serving his country during the Korean Conflict. While in the Army he served as a Military Policeman in Germany. After his honorable discharge, he returned to farm with his family.

Merlyn married Betty on January 1, 1954 in Griswold. After they married he farmed on the Heilesen Brothers Farms until his retirement in 1990 where he continued to reside and rent his land to Keith Fiscus. Merlyn and Betty were blessed with five children: Susan, Kathy, Beverly, Douglas and David. Merlyn was a man of faith and a lifetime member of the Irwin Church of Christ. He loved his family and passed his excellent work ethic on to them. He also knew how to have fun and taught his kids and most of his grandkids to ride bikes and water ski. He was a 4-H leader, a big supporter of school athletic events, and enjoyed a good round of golf. He was faithful in his support of the Shelby County Fair, eating apple pie and ice cream each summer with the senior citizens on Apple Pie Morning. He loved farming, raising cattle and "being his own boss." He so enjoyed raising sweet corn that he planned his vacations around when the sweet corn would be ready. Merlyn died on Sunday, January 18, 2015 at Jennie Edmundson Hospital in Council Bluffs, having attained the age of eighty-six years, five months and ten days.

Merlyn was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Mary Heilesen, sister Marjorie Davey and brother Gaylord Heilesen. Merlyn is survived by his wife of sixty-one years Betty Heilesen of Kirkman; daughters: Susan and her husband Mel Sheeran of Kalispell, MT; Kathy Heilesen of Council Bluffs; and Beverly Martz of Irwin; sons Douglas Heilesen and his wife Kate of Denison and David Heilesen and his wife Wendy of Social Circle, GA, twenty-one grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; other family members and friends.

Ted Sieck officiated the 11:00 a.m. Funeral Service on Friday, January 23, 2015 at the Church of Christ in Irwin. Music was provided by Peggy Ahrenholtz. Honorary casket bearers were Justin Sheeran and Josiah Sheeran. Serving as casket bearers were Reid Heilesen, Andrew Heilesen, Jason Martz, Jon Richard, Dustin Martz, Christian Heilesen, and Corbin Martz. Military Rites were performed by the Harlan American Legion Helmer Reyelt Post No. 150 and the Shelby County VFW Post No. 941 at Oak Hill Cemetery in Irwin.



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