

Gerald Leonard, 79

Dec. 28, 1934 - Dec. 23, 2014

HARLAN — Gerald D. Leonard was born to Don and Edna Sadie (May) Leonard in Manhattan, KS on December 28, 1934.

Jerry and Joyce were married in 1957 in Lawrence, KS. To this marriage three children were born. Gary, the oldest died of cancer in 1983 when he was 21 years old and Thomas died of SIDS in 1960. His daughter Melanie and grandson Sean live in Chattanooga, TN. Jerry went through the Manhattan school system and always said that he spent more time at the little red table in the corner in kindergarten than any other of the students. He put himself through college by working at the Manhattan Lumber yard and graduated



from Kansas State University with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Prior to going into the Army at Fort Eustis for two years as a 2nd Lt., he worked for six months at Emerson Electric in St. Louis. Following his stint in the Army, he worked for ten years in Seattle at Boeing. Following the massive lay off of 60,000 plus, he worked for Western Electric in Naperville, IL for ten years and then he finished up his Electrical Engineering career at Litton Data Commands Systems in Agoura Hills, CA. He was part of a team that installed Air Defense Systems in Saudi Arabia where he traveled five times for eight weeks at a time. After sixteen years it was time for retirement and the Lord led Jerry and Joyce to Harlan and they have been here for seventeen years.

Jerry and Joyce had visited Grace Baptist during their visits to check out Harlan so knew they would become a part of that church. It has been a blessing to have such a caring church family. Jerry accepted Christ as a young boy through influence of his grandma's telling the great Bible Stories. After reading an issue of Back to the Bible magazine he knelt beside his bed and asked Christ to come into his life. Through the years he had many responsibilities of teaching Sunday School both to children and adults and serving his Lord in leadership positions. He always said that accepting Christ was the best decision he ever made. He has had hobbies of coin collecting, collecting old radios, model trains and antique cars. He often said that his job got in the way of his hobbies. His most notable hobby was the ownership of his 1936 Ford Touring Sedan that he bought in 1963 and sold in 2013 to his nephew Rick. We had some exciting rides going down a "S" curve with mechanical brakes while living in Seattle. Jerry and Joyce came to love Harlan after moving from a city of 105,000. There is still a certain trust in a small Midwest town that they have enjoyed through the years.

All memorials go to the Sondergaard Memory Care Unit at the Elm Crest Retirement Community in Harlan.

Jerry is preceded in death by two sons, three brothers and parents. He is survived by his wife, Joyce, daughter Melanie, and grandson Sean, nephew and niece, Rick and Linda Martin and niece Lana Carlson all of Kansas City, MO.

Funeral services were officiated by Pastor Joe Earle at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, December 26, 2014 at the Grace Baptist Church in Harlan. Burial was held at the Harlan Cemetery with Don Norgaard and Don Petersen serving as honorary casket bearers and Stan Christiansen, Elliot Svendsen, Jeff Swensen, Robert Wulschleger and Larry McDermott serving as casket bearers.

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