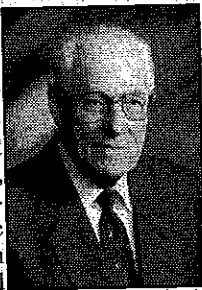


Gary Vermeer, 58, Pella

Gary J. Vermeer was born on September 29, 1918, near Pella, Iowa. He was the first of four sons that were born to Jacob (J G) and Anna Elsie Haven Vermeer and was baptized Gerrit John Vermeer, after his grandfather, at the First Christian Reformed Church in Pella.



G. Vermeer
Gary, and his three brothers: Elmer H., John H. and Harry G., grew up on the family farm east of Pella, which is now the Pella Nursery Company. He began his formal education at the Plainview Country Grade School near their family farm home and was raised in a farming community with strong Dutch roots. Gary graduated from Pella Public High School with the Class of 1935. On February 14, 1941, he was united in marriage with Matilda Van Gorp, daughter of John M. and Minnie Blom Van Gorp, at her parent's farm home east of Pella. Gary and Matilda started their lives together with 120 acres of land on a farm, given by his parents. On this land in 1953, they built a new, modest home which remained their home throughout their married lifetime. To this union three children were born: Stanley James, Robert Lee and Mary Ann.

In 1948, Gary and his cousin, Ralph Vermeer, started in business together five years after inventing a

wagon hoist, which made it easier to unload corn. The demand for this labor-saving device and Gary's ingenuity prompted him to open Vermeer Manufacturing Company. In 1950, his brother, Harry Vermeer, joined the company and became the treasurer. From that small operation, the company has grown to an international organization that manufactures agricultural, construction, environmental and industrial equipment. Perhaps Gary's best known manufacturing contribution is the Vermeer round hay baler, an invention that revolutionized agriculture in 1971. It was one of his many innovative ideas and industry-changing products that emerged from his common theme, "there has to be a better way". Gary operated the company, formed the pattern of his decision making and the cornerstone of present and future actions in a way that demonstrated the importance he placed on the 4P's of Philosophy: Principles, strong Biblical principles; People, employees that are self-motivated, learn through experience and share in the profits; Product, if there is a need for something you build it with a product that lasts; and Profit, maintaining a position of financial strength. Under Gary's guidance, other products manufactured by the company include stump cutters, trenchers, tree spades, horizontal directional drills and many other products in its product segments.

Obituaries

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