

Merlin M. Manatt <sup>GH-R</sup>  
3-13-2014



Merlin M. Manatt, age 85, of Grinnell, died on Tuesday, March 11, 2014, at the Mayflower Community in Grinnell.

Mass of the Resurrection will be held at 10:00 a.m., Saturday, March 15, 2014, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Grinnell with Father Timothy Manatt, S.J. presiding. Interment will be in Hazelwood Cemetery in Grinnell. Following the interment, a reception will be held at the Grinnell Country Club, 933 - 13th Avenue, Grinnell, Iowa 50112.

Visitation with the family present will be held from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Friday at the Smith Funeral Home in Grinnell. A scripture service will be held at 6:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be designated to the Spaulding Center for Transportation, St. Mary's Capital Campaign Fund or to the Manatt Family Urgent Care Clinic at Grinnell Regional Medical Center, mailed in care of the Smith Funeral Home, PO Box 368, Grinnell, Iowa 50112. Memories and condolences may be shared with the family at [www.smithfh.com](http://www.smithfh.com).

Merlin was born the son of Gerald Whitcomb Manatt and Margaret Mary (Brothersen) Manatt on October 3, 1928, in Grinnell, Iowa. He was raised in Brooklyn, Iowa and graduated from Brooklyn High School with the class of 1946. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa.

Merlin was united in marriage to Verna M. George at St. Xavier Basilica in Dyersville, Iowa. The couple lived in Victor and Brooklyn respectively before moving to Grinnell, where they raised their children and were very active in the community. Merlin was a member of the St. Mary's Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus in Victor and Grinnell, where he was a past Grand Knight, and the Grinnell Elks Club.

In early 1959, after owning an implement dealership in Victor, Merlin joined his brothers, Junie and Clair, at Manatts, Inc., which had been established in 1947. Merlin took on the duty of the road building division for the growing company. This division started with rolled stone base and sealcoat, and graduated to asphalt paving. With Merlin's assistance, Manatts, Inc. over the next three decades grew through its acquisition of United Concrete, Iowa Road Builders, Basic Materials, L.L. Pelling Co., C.W. Shirey Co., Wendling Quarries, and Illowa Investments. No matter how diversified the company became, Merlin's real passion and forte was the compassion he had for the people and families that worked for Manatts, Inc. He was a mover of men and mountains.

Merlin also took on an active leadership role in the construction industry as a whole. He served as president of the Associated General Contractors of Iowa in 1977, was president of the Asphalt Paving Association of Iowa in 1979, and was inducted into the AGC of Iowa Hall of Fame in 2004. He served on the board of directors of the National Aggregate Association from 1985 until 1997, which is now known as the NSSGA, of which his son Tony now serves on the board of directors.

Merlin mentored the second generation of Manatts during the 1980s and 1990s, served on its Board of Directors, actively participated in its 50 year celebration, and enjoyed his retirement after "the boys" were able to take on the daily operation of the company. Merlin was a vital part of creating the high integrity and quality work that Manatts, Inc. has been recognized for throughout the industry.

Merlin is survived by his children, Bradford James (Mary) Manatt of Newton, Iowa, Michelle Marie Manatt of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Margaret Mary 'Molly' (Bob) Hier of Castle Rock, Colorado, Julie Ann Manatt of Eden Prairie, Minnesota, and Anthony John 'Tony' (Piper) Manatt of DeWitt, Iowa; 13 grandchildren, Drew, Joe, Amanda, Emily, Ellen, Gabe, Nick, Molly, Maxwell, Jai, Hans, Beau and Hunter; 4 great grandchildren; and sisters, Marilyn Clayton of Brooklyn and Janet (Fred) Manatt Pilcher of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Merlin was preceded in death by his parents, wife, Verna M. Manatt; son, Jeffrey George Manatt; and siblings, Mary Ellen Christen, G.J. 'Junie' Manatt, Clair Manatt, Judy Sueppel, and Anita Manatt.

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PCCR 3-19-2014

*Record* **MERLIN M. MANATT** 3-20-14

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